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It's Time to Junk Junk Food!

Tired, crabby, or unfocused in class? It could be the food you are eating. The lack of healthy and tasty school lunch selections has recently become a problem in almost every elementary, middle and high school across the nation. Most schools sell junk food to students and I think this is wrong. There are many good reasons to remove junk food from school lunch menus, and creating a healthier student body is number one. Junk foods should be taken out of school lunch menus because they affect your body and mind in negative ways.

Junk food is a major cause of childhood obesity. 32% of youth are overweight and nearly 74% are unfit. The bad food offered in public schools contributes to this unacceptable problem. A single 12-ounce can of soda has as much as 13 teaspoons of sugar in the form of high-fructose corn syrup. Many of these sodas are available to kids in school at low prices as well as many other completely unhealthy foods like chips and cookies. School lunches have a very high fat content and the USDA supplies schools with the same commodity foods as prisons. Due to the lack of fresh and flavorful food, many students will choose to buy the cheap junk food offered instead. If we could stock vending machines and cafeterias with healthier foods, it would definitely make a dent in the childhood obesity rate.

Another reason cafeterias should start serving healthier food is that junk food does not give kids the energy needed to stay focused in school or the power to participate in sports. Lunch is right in the middle of the day; if you eat fatty or sugary foods, it could cause you to get tired and not pay attention in your afternoon classes. In addition, junk food zaps your energy, which affects your physical activity. You cannot perform your best if you don't have any energy. Many people on my swim team used to snack on chips and soda before practice. When some of us complained about getting tired and not being able to make it through practice, our coach asked us what we were eating beforehand. When he heard about our diet, he told us that we shouldn't be consuming fried, fatty foods before we exercise. We should be eating healthy, natural foods because these give us energy and are good for our bodies.

Many people may argue that banning junk food in schools is not a good idea. Students say that junk food just tastes better than healthy food and they prefer it. There is no rule that says healthy food can't taste good! Many junk foods can be replaced by similar tasting, healthier substitutes. Instead of fried chips, provide baked. Instead of soda, offer carbonated fruit juice. If substituting all of the unhealthy foods does not work, what about reducing the amount that we serve? Have a healthy main portion for lunch and a small dessert; sweets are not bad as long as they are consumed in moderation. There are multiple ways to solve the problem of people's taste buds craving tasty foods. We just have to enforce this change.

Providing junk food in school cafeterias is just an all-around bad idea. We need to eat healthy food so we can reach our fullest academic and physical potential. The food we eat affects our body and mind and we need to take advantage of that! Now that we understand the problem, it's time to fix it by banning the sale of junk food in schools.