

EFFECT OF FAST FOOD AND INSTANT FOOD AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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ABSTRACT : Concepts, relationships, lifestyles are metamorphosed to accommodate the new jet age and eating habits too is no exception. Healthy nutritious foods have been replaced by the new food mantra – JUNK FOOD. 'Junk food' the term, refers to fast foods which are easy to make and quick to consume. They are zero in nutritional value and often high in fat, salt, sugar, and calories. Foods which fall under the umbrella of "junk food" vary, depending on a number of factors. Snack foods like chips, candies, and so forth are generally universally agreed upon as fitting in this category, and some people also lump fast food like hamburgers, pizza, and fries into the group.

INTRODUCTION : In a society that functions at a high speed, fast food has quickly been adopted as the preferred food of choice. Fast food restaurants and their advertisements are permeating our neighborhoods, schools, television, and culture. McDonald's and Burger King are not the only fast food industries invading our communities, our minds, and our stomachs; Taco Bell, Pizza Hut, Kentucky Fried Chicken are just a few others. It seems to have engulfed every age; every race and the newest entrants on stage are children, school going in particular.

Troiano and Flegal (1998) mentioned that those who pose more weight gain than normal standards are more likely to become obese. Body Mass Index (BMI) is the most ideal standard used for assessing the weight of children (Willett et al. 1999). BMI is a practical method to judge extra body fat in individuals (Cole et al. 2000). A study done in West Bengal on adolescent girls in the age of 10-19 years revealed that 14.7 % adolescents were thin and 37.8% were having stunted growth (Das and Biswas 2005).

As per Helena Group Project (2007) adolescents living in western countries are adopting unhealthy lifestyles which are causing adverse affect on their health. Such lifestyles developed during adolescence lead to many fateful diseases in later years of life. Unhealthy eating habits once developed during childhood, would become extremely difficult to modify at later years of life and therefore would have lifelong impact on their mental and physical well being (Lobstein and Frelut, 2003; Koplan et al. 2005).

According to the Ministry of Health and Family (2009) inadequate nutritional intake during adolescence can have serious consequences throughout life? Poor nutrition during adolescence can weaken the stamina of the adolescents in the early years as well as in the later years of life. Moreover, an adolescent girl who is malnourished will further have complications during pregnancy and would give birth to an unhealthy child, and the vicious cycle of malnutrition would move from one generation to the other. Children with a family history of obesity are at a high possibility of turning obese.

FAST FOOD:

Fast food is a mass-produced food that is prepared and served very quickly. The food is typically less nutritionally valuable compared to other foods and dishes. While any meal with low preparation time can be considered fast food, typically the term refers to food sold in a restaurant or store with frozen, preheated or precooked ingredients, and served to the customer in a packaged form for take-out/take-away.

Fast food restaurants are traditionally distinguished by their ability to serve food via a drive-through. Outlets may be stands or kiosks, which may provide no shelter or seating, (Jakle, John (1999) or fast food restaurants (also known as *quick service restaurants*). Franchise operations that are part of restaurant chains have standardized foodstuffs shipped to each restaurant from central locations (Talwar, Jennifer, 2003).

Fast food began with the first fish and chip shops in Britain in the 1860s. Drive-through restaurants were first popularized in the 1950s in the United States. The term "fast food" was recognized in a dictionary by Merriam-Webster in 1951.

According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), fast foods are quick alternatives to home-cooked meals. They are also high in saturated fat, sugar, salt and calories.^[3] Eating too much fast food has been linked to, among other things, colorectal cancer, obesity and high cholesterol.

The traditional family dinner is increasingly being replaced by the consumption of takeaway, or eating "on the run". As a result, the time invested on food preparation is getting lower and lower, with an average couple in the United States spending 47 minutes and 19 seconds per day on food preparation in 2013.

INSTANT FOOD:

Convenience food, or tertiary processed food, is food that is commercially prepared (often through processing) to optimise ease of consumption. Such food is usually ready to eat without further preparation. It may also be easily portable, have a long shelf life, or offer a combination of such convenient traits. Although restaurant meals meet this definition, the term is seldom applied to them. Convenience foods include ready-to-eat dry products, frozen foods such as TV dinners, shelf-stable foods, prepared mixes such as cake mix, and snack foods.

Bread, cheese, salted food and other prepared foods have been sold for thousands of years. Other kinds were developed with improvements in food technology. Types of convenience foods can vary by country and geographic region. Some convenience foods have received criticism due to concerns about nutritional content and how their packaging may increase solid waste in landfills. Various methods are used to reduce the unhealthy aspects of commercially produced food and fight childhood obesity.

Convenience food is commercially prepared for ease of consumption (Jean Anderson; Barbara Deskins, 1995). Products designated as convenience food are often sold as hot, ready-to-eat dishes; as room-temperature, shelf-stable products; or as refrigerated or frozen food products that require minimal preparation (typically just heating) Convenience foods have also been described as foods that have been created to "make them more appealing to the consumer." Convenience foods and restaurants are similar in that they save time. They differ in that restaurant food is ready to eat, whilst convenience food usually requires rudimentary preparation. Both typically cost more money and less time compared to home cooking from scratch.

EFFECTS OF FAST FOOD AND INSTANT FOOD ON PHYSICAL HEALTH:

- **Digestive and cardiovascular systems:** Your digestive and circulatory systems are among the large organ systems in your body. Digestive organs pass food through your system, breaking it down and absorbing nutrients so you'll get the benefits, while your circulatory system -- made up of your heart and blood vessels -- transports oxygen and other compounds throughout your body. Your circulatory and digestive systems do not directly convert food into energy, but they process and circulate nutrients so your cells can use them for fuel.
- **Sugar and fat:** Sugar and fat are two of the most widely talked about dietary topics, with one of the most commonly asked questions by people with (and without) diabetes being "how much sugar or fat can I have in my diet?"
- **Sodium:** Sodium is a mineral that's essential for life. It's regulated in the body by your kidneys, and it helps control your body's fluid balance. It also helps send nerve impulses and affects muscle function.
- **Respiratory system:** The Respiratory System is vital to every human being. Without it, we would cease to live outside of the womb. Let us begin by taking a look at the structure of the respiratory system and how vital it is to life. During inhalation or exhalation air is pulled towards or away from the lungs, by several cavities, tubes, and openings. The respiratory tract is the path of air from the nose to the lungs. It is divided into two sections: Upper Respiratory Tract and the Lower Respiratory Tract. Included in the upper respiratory tract are the Nostrils, Nasal Cavities, Pharynx, Epiglottis, and the Larynx. The lower respiratory tract consists of the Trachea, Bronchi, Bronchioles, and the Lungs.
- **Central nervous system:** The central nervous system consists of the brain and spinal cord. It is referred to as "central" because it combines information from the entire body and coordinates activity across the whole organism.
- **Reproductive system:** Human reproductive system, organ system by which humans reproduce and bear live offspring. Provided all organs are present, normally constructed, and functioning properly, the essential features of human reproduction are (1) liberation of an ovum, or egg, at a specific time in the reproductive cycle, (2) internal fertilization of the ovum by spermatozoa, or sperm cells, (3) transport of the fertilized ovum to the uterus, or womb, (4) implantation of the blastocyst, the early embryo developed from the fertilized ovum, in the wall of the uterus.
- **Integumentary system (skin, hair, nails):** The integumentary system is an organ system consisting of the skin, hair, nails, and exocrine glands. The skin is only a few millimeters thick yet is by far the largest organ in the body. The average person's skin weighs 10 pounds and has a surface area of almost 20 square feet. Skin forms the body's outer covering and forms a barrier to protect the body from chemicals, disease, UV light, and physical damage. Hair and nails extend from the skin to reinforce the skin and protect it from environmental.
- **Skeletal system (bones):** The skeletal system includes all of the bones, cartilages, and ligaments of the body that support and give shape to the body and body structures. The skeleton consists of the bones of the body. For adults, there are 206 bones in the skeleton. Younger individuals have higher numbers of bones

because some bones fuse together during childhood and adolescence to form an adult bone. The primary functions of the skeleton are to provide a rigid, internal structure that can support the weight of the body against the force of gravity, and to provide a structure upon which muscles can act to produce movements of the body. The lower portion of the skeleton is specialized for stability during walking or running. In contrast, the upper skeleton has greater mobility and ranges of motion, features that allow you to lift and carry objects or turn your head and trunk.

**EFFECTS OF FAST FOOD AND INSTANT FOOD ON MENTAL HEALTH:
(WWW.LIVESTRONG.COM)**

- **Depression:** Depression (major depressive disorder or clinical depression) is a common but serious mood disorder. It causes severe symptoms that affect how you feel, think, and handle daily activities, such as sleeping, eating, or working. To be diagnosed with depression, the symptoms must be present for at least two weeks.
- **Anxiety:** Occasional anxiety is a normal part of life. You might feel anxious when faced with a problem at work, before taking a test, or making an important decision. But anxiety disorders involve more than temporary worry or fear. For a person with an anxiety disorder, the anxiety does not go away and can get worse over time. The feelings can interfere with daily activities such as job performance, school work, and relationships. There are several different types of anxiety disorders. Examples include generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, and social anxiety disorder.
- **Hyperactivity:** Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a brain disorder marked by an ongoing pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development. Inattention means a person wanders off task, lacks persistence, has difficulty sustaining focus, and is disorganized; and these problems are not due to defiance or lack of comprehension. Hyperactivity means a person seems to move about constantly, including in situations in which it is not appropriate; or excessively fidgets, taps, or talks. In adults, it may be extreme restlessness or wearing others out with constant activity. Impulsivity means a person makes hasty actions that occur in the moment without first thinking about them and that may have high potential for harm; or a desire for immediate rewards or inability to delay gratification. An impulsive person may be socially intrusive and excessively interrupt others or make important decisions without considering the long-term consequences.
- **Dementia:** Dementia is a general term for loss of memory and other mental abilities severe enough to interfere with daily life. It is caused by physical changes in the brain.

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