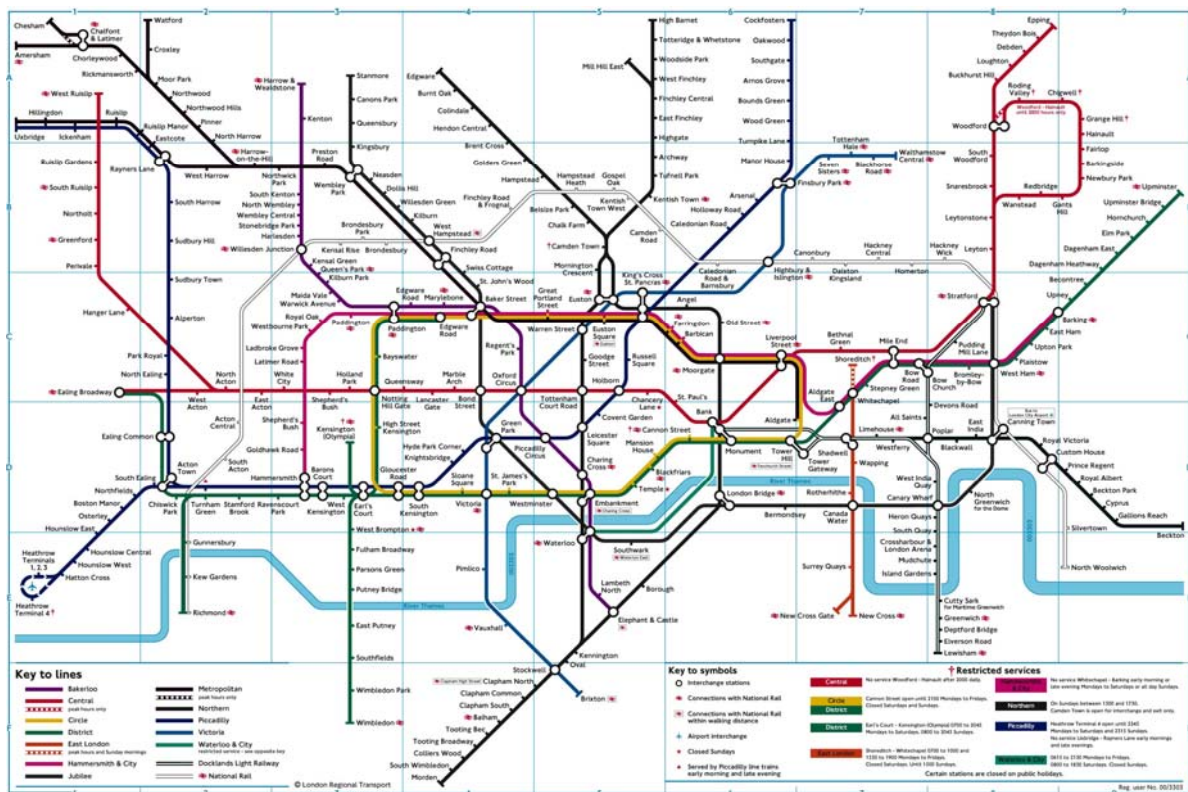




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What's missing in this pile of food?

**Meat, and without it children are damaged, say scientists.
Rubbish, reply vegetarians - led by Paul McCartney**

David Adam and Tim Radford in Washington
Guardian, Tuesday February 22, 2005

Some say meat is murder, while others dismiss a meal without animal products as rabbit food. Now a leading US nutritionist has given both sides something to chew on with a claim that parents who refuse to feed children meat are acting unethically.

Professor Lindsay Allen of the University of California said that to deny growing children animal products during the critical first few years of life could cause permanent damage. She said foods made from meat contain some nutrients not found anywhere else and are hard to replace in the diet of vulnerable groups.

"If you're talking about feeding young children and pregnant women and lactating women I would go as far as to say it is unethical to withhold these foods during that period of life," she said. "There's a lot of empirical research that will show the very adverse effects on child development of doing that."

She was especially critical of parents who imposed a vegan lifestyle on their children, which denied them milk, cheese and butter as well as meat. "There's absolutely no question that it's unethical for parents to bring up their children as strict vegans," she told the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Washington. There are an estimated 250,000 vegans and up to 4m vegetarians in the UK, but there are no figures on how many children are brought up on such diets.

Prof Allen made the claims after her research showed that adding just two spoonfuls of meat to the daily diet of poverty-stricken children in Africa transformed them physically and mentally. Over two years the children almost doubled their muscle development, and showed dramatic improvements in mental skills. They also became more active, talkative and playful at school.

"Meat provides a concentrated source of essential micronutrients such as zinc, vitamin B12, calcium, iron and vitamin A, which cannot easily be obtained solely from plant foods," she told the conference.



Studies of vegetarians in both the United States and Europe have shown that missing out on meat and dairy products can permanently impair a child's development. Researchers in Holland found that by the time children were 16 years old it was too late to help them by re-introducing meat and milk into their diets. They remained impaired. Prof Allen accepted that adults could avoid animal foods if they took the right supplements, but said the risks were too great for developing children.

The African study involved 544 children in Kenya, typically aged about seven, whose diet chiefly consists of starchy, low-nutrition corn and bean staples lacking these micronutrients. Over a period of two years, one group of the children was given a daily supplement of two ounces of meat. Two other groups received a cup of milk a day or an oil supplement containing the same amount of energy. A fourth group ate their normal diet.

"The group that received the meat supplement showed the biggest improvement in fluid intelligence over the two years, and those who had either milk or energy supplements were better than the controls. The group that received the meat supplements were more active in the playground, more talkative and playful, and showed more leadership skills," she said.

Other nutritionists questioned how relevant the results were to the developed world. "This study was conducted in a very different environment so it's difficult to apply the findings to the UK because they're talking about malnourished children," said Nilani Sritharan of the Medical Research Council's human nutrition unit in Cambridge.

"I wouldn't say [a vegan diet for children] is unethical. I would say if someone is giving their child a vegan diet they need to be given a lot of guidance and you would need to monitor the child quite carefully." She said the danger areas are the energy and iron content in the diet of vegan children, who also need supplements of vitamin B12, which is missing altogether.

Alex Bourke, chair of the Vegan Society, dismissed Prof Allen's remarks as "propaganda" for the US meat and dairy industries. Prof Allen is director of a research centre run by the US Agricultural Research Service, part of the Department of Agriculture.

He said: "This is a very unfair comparison. You do need to eat a healthy, balanced vegan diet as with any other system. These African villages were subsisting on corn and beans - that is not a balanced diet." Vegan parents must also give their children leafy vegetables, nuts and seeds, he said.

Sir Paul McCartney, whose first wife Linda put her name to a meat-free range of food, telephoned the BBC yesterday to dismiss Prof Allen's claims as "rubbish". He told the BBC Radio 2 Jeremy Vine Show that he had been a vegetarian for 20 years and raised his children the same with no ill-effects. "I really do think this is rubbish. I suspect these things are engineered by livestock people who have seen sales fall off. It has been a good thing for me and my children who are no shorter than other children."

Cruelty to Animals: Mechanized Madness

The green pastures and idyllic barnyard scenes of years past are now distant memories. On today's factory farms, animals are crammed by the thousands into filthy windowless sheds, wire cages, gestation crates, and other confinement systems.

These animals will never raise their families, root in the soil, build nests, or do anything that is natural to them. They won't even feel the sun on their backs or breathe fresh air until the day they are loaded onto trucks bound for slaughter.

Animals on today's factory farms have no legal protection from cruelty that would be illegal if it were inflicted on dogs or cats: neglect, mutilation, genetic manipulation, and drug regimens that cause chronic pain and crippling, transport through all weather extremes, and gruesome and violent slaughter.

Yet farmed animals are no less intelligent or capable of feeling pain than are the dogs and cats we cherish as companions.

The factory farming system of modern agriculture strives to maximize output while minimizing costs. Cows, calves, pigs, chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, and other animals are kept in small cages, in jam-packed sheds, or on filthy feedlots, often with so little space that they can't even turn around or lie down comfortably.

They are deprived of exercise so that all their bodies' energy goes toward producing flesh, eggs, or milk for human consumption.

They are fed drugs to fatten them faster and to keep them alive in conditions that would otherwise kill them, and they are genetically altered to grow faster or to produce much more milk or eggs than they would naturally. Many animals become crippled under their own weight and die within inches of water and food.

While the suffering of all animals on factory farms is similar, each type of farmed animal faces different types of cruelty.

When they have finally grown large enough, animals raised for food are crowded onto trucks and transported over many miles through all weather extremes to the slaughterhouse. Those who survive this nightmarish journey will have their throats slit, often while they are still fully conscious.

Many are still conscious when they are plunged into the scalding water of the de-feathering or hair-removal tanks or while their bodies are being skinned or hacked apart.

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Chickens killed for their flesh in the United States are bred and drugged to grow so quickly that their hearts, lungs, and limbs often can't keep up.

- **Hens used for eggs** live six or seven to a battery cage the size of a file drawer, thousands of which are stacked tier upon tier in huge, filthy warehouses.
- **Cattle** are castrated, their horns are ripped out of their heads, and third-degree burns (branding) are inflicted on them, all without any pain relief.
- **Cows used for their milk** are drugged and bred to produce unnatural amounts of milk; they have their babies stolen from them shortly after birth and sent to notoriously cruel veal farms so that humans can drink the calves' milk.
- **Mother pigs** on factory farms are confined to crates so small that they are unable to turn around or even lie down comfortably.
- **Fish on aquafarms** spend their entire lives in cramped, filthy enclosures, and many suffer from parasitic infections, diseases, and debilitating injuries. Conditions on some farms are so horrendous that 40 percent of the fish may die before farmers can kill and package them for food.
- **Turkeys'** beaks and toes are burned off with a hot blade. Many suffer heart failure or debilitating leg pain, often becoming crippled under the weight of their genetically manipulated and drugged bodies.

www.goveg.com/factoryFarming.asp (09.05.06)



Three children seriously ill after E-coli outbreak in Fife

By Paul Kelbie, Scotland Correspondent, The Independent

Published: 10 May 2006

Three nursery children are seriously ill in hospital after suffering kidney failure as a result of a suspected E.coli O157 outbreak. The two-year-olds were all members of the same nursery in Dunfermline, Fife, when they fell ill between the end of April and early May.

As doctors treated the children at Yorkhill Hospital in Glasgow, health officials were investigating the outbreak's source. The nursery, owned by the Careshare Group and is in the grounds of Lauder College's Halbeath campus, was closed yesterday for investigations.

Professor Bill McIntosh, Lauder College's principal, confirmed that two of the three sick two-year-olds were the children of college students. "We understand that preliminary reports... suggest the outbreak is not focused on the nursery itself," he added. "Obviously our thoughts and best wishes go out to the parents of the children and we pray for a speedy recovery."

E.coli O157 is a species of bacteria that could be lethal. It killed 21 elderly people and infected another 400 in Lanarkshire in 1996 in the world's worst recorded instance of E.coli poisoning. The source of outbreak was traced to John Barr's butcher's shop in Wishaw.

Dr Charles Saunders, a consultant in public health medicine for NHS Fife, said the source of the children's infections was not yet known.



***E. coli* O157:H7 Fact Sheet**

E. coli* O157:H7 is one of many strains of the bacterium *Escherichia coli

Most strains of *E. coli* are harmless and live in the intestines of healthy animals and humans. *E. coli* O157:H7 is a strain of *E. coli* that produces a toxin and can cause severe illness.

People usually become infected with *E. coli* O157:H7 by eating contaminated food

The organism can live in the intestines of healthy cattle. Eating meat (especially ground beef) that is rare or undercooked is the most common way of becoming infected. Drinking unpasteurized milk or juices, and drinking or swimming in sewage-contaminated water can also cause infection. The bacteria are present in an infected person's feces (stool) and may be spread from person to person.

***E. coli* O157:H7 can cause severe bloody diarrhea and abdominal cramps**

Sometimes infection causes nonbloody diarrhea or no symptoms. Symptoms begin 2 to 8 days after exposure. Hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) is a serious complication that occurs in some infected people, particularly children under 5 and the elderly. In this syndrome, red blood cells are destroyed and kidney failure occurs.

Infection can be diagnosed by detecting the bacterium in the stool

Your health care provider can request a special culture for *E. coli* O157:H7 from a laboratory.

See your doctor if you think you may have this infection

- Most people recover without specific treatment in 5 to 10 days. Fluid and electrolyte replacement is important when diarrhea is watery or there are signs of dehydration. Antidiarrheal agents should be avoided. Antibiotics may actually worsen the disease.
- HUS is a life-threatening condition that is usually treated in an intensive care unit.
- If foodhandlers, health care and child care workers, children in child care, or anyone in the family of such people have an *E. coli* O157:H7 infection, they should contact their local health department to get specific recommendations.

Infection with *E. coli* O157:H7 can be prevented by:

- Eat only thoroughly cooked meats and poultry (using a meat thermometer is the only way to ensure that food is thoroughly cooked).
- Consume only pasteurized milk and dairy products.
- Eliminate cross-contamination from raw foods to cooked ones by thoroughly washing cutting boards and utensils, and by discarding used meat packages.
- Avoid sewage-contaminated water.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables before eating.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap before and after handling foods, before eating, and after using the toilet or changing diapers.

Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene
Epidemiology & Disease Control Program May, 2002



BBC NEWS

Country profile: Norway

The Kingdom of Norway enjoys one of the highest standards of living in the world.

Its prosperity is due in large part to the discovery in the late 1960s of off-shore oil and gas deposits. Annual oil revenue amounts to around \$40bn (£21bn).

More than half of Norway's exports come from this sector. To counter inflation, there is cross-party agreement to restrict spending of oil revenue. The very considerable surplus is invested for future generations.

Norway declared its independence in 1905 when the union with Sweden was dissolved. Norway's people value their independence and prosperity highly. The Norwegians rejected membership of the then European Economic Community in 1972, and of the European Union in 1994, despite being urged by their governments to vote "yes".

In recent decades, Norway has forged a stronger role for itself in international politics. It has mediated between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation, and fostered contact between the Sri Lankan government and Tamil separatists.

Norway has a rich, sea-faring tradition and its lengthy, rugged coastline has been central to its development. More than a thousand years ago, Viking raids on the coasts of Britain and France were commonplace. The Vikings also mounted expeditions to the coast of North America.

Later, the Norwegians began to trade. Originally, the coastal waters provided fish for export. Today, Norway is among the world's largest exporters of fuels and fuel products.

Norway registered objections to the 1986 International Whaling Commission (IWC) ban on whaling and resumed the practice on a commercial basis in 1993. It argues that whaling is no more cruel than fishing and that stocks are sufficient to allow it to continue. Conservationists disagree.

- **Population:** 4.6 million (UN, 2005)
- **Capital:** Oslo
- **Area:** 323,759 sq km (125,004 sq miles)
- **Major language:** Norwegian
- **Major religion:** Christianity
- **Life expectancy:** 77 years (men), 82 years (women) (UN)
- **Monetary unit:** 1 Norwegian krone = 100 ore
- **Main exports:** Fuels and fuel products, machinery, metal products
- **GNI per capita:** US \$52,030 (World Bank, 2005)
- **Internet domain:** .no
- **International dialling code:** +47

King: Harald V

Prime minister: Jens Stoltenberg

Labour Party leader Jens Stoltenberg took office as prime minister in a centre-left "red-green" alliance with the Socialist and Centre parties in October 2005, following elections the previous month which brought defeat for the former centre-right government.

The new administration is the first Norwegian majority government since the mid 1980s.

Mr Stoltenberg promises increased spending on education, health and welfare and has reversed the tax cuts proposed by the previous administration. He says that budget policy will stay within Norway's strict rules on spending oil revenues.

He has also given his backing to limited oil exploration in the Arctic.

His government has withdrawn Norway's very small contingent of troops from Iraq but promises to increase the country's profile in UN peacekeeping operations elsewhere.

Mr Stoltenberg, an economist, was 46 when he took office. He was prime minister for the first time from 2000 until 2001.

- Finance minister: Kristin Halvorsen
- Oil minister: Odd Roger Enoksen
- Foreign minister: Jonas Gahr Stoere

Norway's public broadcaster, NRK, monopolised the airwaves until 1981, when the first local radio and TV stations opened. Since then, private local and national stations have built up substantial audiences, competing with NRK for listeners and viewers.

The country's Schibsted group, publisher of the Aftenposten daily and the mass-circulation VG, is one of Scandinavia's largest media concerns.

Digital television - via cable and satellite - is growing in popularity and offers a wide range of specialist channels. Plans are afoot for a digital terrestrial TV service.

Norwegians are among the world's keenest newspaper readers. The number of publications is impressive, given the country's small population. Most of the press is privately-owned and openly partisan.

Press freedom is guaranteed by the constitution and public radio and TV broadcast without interference from the government.

Story from BBC NEWS:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/1023276.stm

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