A school food revolution

Look out potato chips, chocolate bars, French fries, and pop. More than 70 percent of Canadians support banning all junk foods, processed foods, and foods high in sugar, cholesterol, and trans fats from school cafeterias, according to a new survey by Food Network Canada and Decima Research Inc.

Of 760 respondents, women (84 percent) were more likely to support a ban than men (67 percent), as were university-educated participants over high school graduates. Fifty-one percent of respondents indicated they'd support a tax increase of $1 per week to improve the quality of school meals.

England's Prime Minister Tony Blair has already put money where his mouth is by pledging £280 million to improve school lunches and also by promising to introduce nationwide nutritional standards for school meals.

To battle obesity amongst youths, Connecticut is attempting to rid public schools of soda pops and junk foods. The move represents the United States' biggest ban of its kind.

In Canada, the overweight/obesity rate of adolescents aged 12 to 17 has jumped from 14 to 29 percent since 1978, reveals a 2004 Canadian Community Health survey. Experts agree it's time to fight back...starting in schools.

Crohn's disease: A naturopathic approach

The 170,000 Canadians with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) likely already know that November is Crohn's awareness month, but did you know that Canada has the highest rate of incidence in the world?

Crohn's affects the digestive system and causes intestinal tissue to swell, form sores, and even bleed. Symptoms include abdominal pain, cramping, fatigue, and diarrhea.

A report from the University of Manitoba recently revealed that the highest rate of incidence is in Nova Scotia (at 580 people with IBD per 100,000). The lowest rate is in BC (331 per 100,000).

"There is no known cause or cure for IBD," according to the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada, yet increasing numbers of people are finding relief without resorting to pharmaceuticals, surgery, or both.

"Naturopathic medicine can help," says naturopathic doctor Alison VandeKerkhove. Her first step is testing Crohn's patients for food sensitivities that can exacerbate symptoms, then eliminating these foods from the diet. Using natural anti-inflammatory agents, digestive supports, energy enhancers, and acupuncture, "we've had good results," she says. Her patients report reduced gastrointestinal pain and swelling and improved energy.

For a referral to a naturopathic physician in Canada email info@naturopathicassoc.ca or search for one at naturopathicassoc.ca/dr.html.