

It's everywhere I look!

A few years ago the Bangor Daily News had an article on the epidemic of diabetes in our society. The numbers are increasing alarmingly and a common age for the onset of diabetes is now the 40's. A clinical psychologist specializing in hyperactivity in children reported that 80% of the children he sees who are on Ritalin, he treats with simple nutrition. By decreasing the sugar in their diet and increasing good foods, he has found in his practice, the need for Ritalin is low. In dental practices across the country and most closely, ours in Dover-Foxcroft, we find the children who do not consume sugared sodas and candy on a frequent basis, simply do not have cavities.

If one reads it all, there are many more examples on how frequent sugar consumption is having a very large negative impact on our society. Most disturbing is diabetes. My father died of complications of diabetes and I started studying it and tried hard to be aware of how I could avoid this life shortening and compromising disease. With regards to frequent sugar consumption, the pancreas, which is our center for sugar control in our bodies, acts eventually, in diabetes, like the boy who cried wolf.

As huge amounts of sugar comes through the intestines after drinking sugared soda (17 teaspoons in 12 ounces), the pancreas reads the amount of sugar and thinks that huge amounts of food is coming with it based on the sugar content. It then puts out large amounts of insulin. Insulin is the body's chemical to distribute the sugar in the body. However, after no food comes down with that huge amount of sugar, the body must backtrack and put out another chemical called glucagon to counteract the over secretion of insulin, when the inaccurate reading of how much good food followed the sugar was made.

After years and years of this crying wolf without justification, the pancreas simply loses the ability to read the amount of sugar coming in. When that happens the result is diabetes.

If these are now considered facts regarding nutrition, then why do caring and loving parents and school system administrators, with the responsibility of training our children to live happy, healthy, educated lives, promote these diseases by encouraging our children to eat sugar frequently. In schools there are soda machines, which encourage consumption of sugar. Our population buys so much soda that some stores have one entire side of an aisle filled with numerous brands of soda. The verdict on frequent sugar consumption is undeniably in. So why, as school systems and parents, do we not care

enough about our children to make simple changes to promote health for our children, by eliminating soda machines from our schools and stopping the sale of candy at athletic functions. It is also very common to use candy as awards at school and at home.

We, in the Penquis area, could make a considerable contribution to the health of our future generations. As Bobby Kennedy said, "Some people ask why?, but I am asking the parents and school administrators of this area, Why not??"

This is the first day of the rest of your life.