

Should We Export Illness or Health

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Last week the Center for Disease Control and Prevention released a report showing that recent immigrants reported significantly better physical and mental health than their U.S. born counterparts. Perhaps people become progressively less healthy the longer they stay in the U.S.

Why? When people move here, they rapidly forgo their own healthier diets and lifestyles. Unfortunately, other countries are beginning to eat like us, live like us and die like us. Chronic diseases have gone from being among the least common to the most frequent causes of premature death and disease in most of the developing worlds. A globalization of illness is occurring that is almost completely preventable.

An Asian way of eating and living may help prevent and even reverse the progression of coronary heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, obesity, prostate cancer, breast cancer. Incorporate more fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes, soy products and fish in your diet. Eat at home more with family and friends. Consume less saturated fats, trans fats and refined carbs. Cook with small amounts of vegetable oils, like canola and sesame. Use animal protein as a condiment and not as the main course. Have more fish and less red meat. Strengthen your family and communities. Walk more, eat less, love more, stress less. Attend you your spiritual life. I've been consulting with food companies such as Pepsi Co., McDonald's, ConAgra, Safeway and Del Monte. I thought that if they would make and market foods that are really tasty, convenient, healthful, educate people about the powerful health benefits of nutrition and lifestyle, and use their considerable marketing resources to make it fun, sexy, crunchy and hip to eat this way, this could make a powerful difference in the lives of millions worldwide.

Not only is this the right thing to do, its good business, so it's sustainable. Last year Pepsi Co reported two thirds of its revenue growth came from healthier foods. McDonald's fruit and walnut salad is so popular, McDonald's is the world's largest purchaser of apples. ConAgra's healthy choice foods had \$1.5 billion in sales last year. Ironically, more healthful foods and lifestyle choices coming from the United States (like McDonald's forthcoming Asian Salad) may help people in Asia and other countries realized the power of their indigenous diet and culture. Instead of globalizing illness, we can globalize health.