

In this edition of **healthbites**, we look at violent video games delaying the development of moral judgment in teenagers. Is the time spent on what is supposed to be harmless entertainment really all that safe? Brock University have done some extensive research and come up with some results.

Over the page we look at the benefits of the humble pear. Little do we realise the health punch packed in their little green skin.

Don't forget our **littlebites** column for helpful hints and tips. Full articles can be supplied upon request if any would like to study further.

Violent Video Games Delay Moral Judgment in Teens

Mirjana Bajovic of Brock University set out to discover whether there was a link between the types of video games teens played, how long they played them, and the teens' levels of moral reasoning: their ability to take the perspective of others into account.

She quizzed a group of eighth-graders (aged 13-14) about their playing habits and patterns, as well as determined their stage of moral reasoning using an established scale of one to four.



Bajovic's results, published in Educational Media International, indicate that there was a significant difference in sociomaturity levels between adolescents who played violent video games for one hour a day and those who played for three or more.

Bajovic suggests that both the content of the games and the time spent playing contribute to the fact that many of the violent gamers achieved only the second stage of sociomoral maturity. Earlier research suggests that adolescents who have not advanced beyond this point "usually have not had enough opportunities to take different roles or consider the perspective of others in real life."

"The present results indicate that some adolescents in the violent video game playing group, who spent three or more hours a day playing violent video games, while assumingly detached from the outside world, are deprived of such opportunities."

"Spending too much time within the virtual world of violence may prevent [gamers] from getting involved in different positive social experiences in real life, and in developing a positive sense of what is right and wrong."

Interestingly, there was no correlation between the amount of time adolescents reported playing non-violent video games and their sociomoral reasoning levels.

Bajovic concedes that "prohibiting adolescents from playing violent video games is not realistic." Instead, parents must be aware of what games their teens are playing and for how long, as well as the "possible effect that those video games may or may not have on their children's attitudes, behaviour and moral development."

Bajovic also recommends that teachers, parents and teens work together to provide the different social opportunities players seem to be lacking. Charity work, community involvement and extracurricular activities all provide gamers with "different perspectives and positive role taking opportunities."

Finally, teachers and parents both need to understand the content and storyline of games, as well as discuss what's "right and wrong within the stories depicted in video games," at home and in the classroom. As difficult as those discussions might be, most teens would probably prefer that approach to their parents pulling the plug. —Science Daily, 4 February 2014

Quote of the Month

Children must have constant care... They should be taught that the development of both the mental and the physical powers rests with themselves, it is the result of effort. They should early learn that happiness is not found in selfish gratification...

—White

healthbites

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Autumn Leaves NZ Ltd

PO Box 654
Rangiora 7440
New Zealand



Ph 03 313 7762
health@autumnleaves.co.nz

www.lifestyl matters.co.nz

little bites

Antibiotics in Animals

New York Times, 27 January 2014

A federal analysis of 30 antibiotics used in animal feed found that the majority of them were likely to be contributing to the growing problem of bacterial infections that are resistant to treatment in people, according to documents released Monday by a health advocacy group.

Cannabis During Pregnancy

ScienceDaily, 27 January 2014

An increasing number of children suffer from the consequences of maternal drug exposure during pregnancy, and Cannabis is one of the most frequently used substances. Professor Harkany warns that relatively subtle damage can significantly increase the risk of delayed neuropsychiatric diseases.

Gardening Good for Children

ScienceDaily, 31 January 2014

Gardening, often considered to be an activity reserved for adults, is gaining ground with children as new programs are introduced that promote gardening's "green" attributes. Physical benefits of getting out in the garden have also been reported for adults and seniors--now, a study from researchers in South Korea finds that children, too, can reap the benefits of digging, raking, and weeding.

Tree Nuts Lower Death Rate

NaturalNews, 3 February 2014

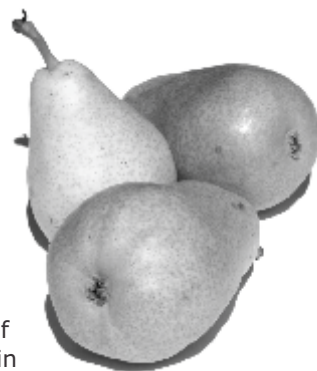
A study by scientists from the Harvard School of Public Health has shown that those who consume nuts daily reduce the risk of death by 20 percent from any cause of death. For death caused by heart problems, eating nuts reduces the risk of death by 29 percent. It was also observed that eating nuts reduces deaths caused by cancer by 11 percent.

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The Pear Truth

The pear truth: 7 reasons to eat more pears

When it comes to health foods, you hardly ever hear about pears. While pears are rarely discussed, they do offer a plethora of amazing health benefits like decreasing your chance of heart disease, decreasing your chance of stroke, helping increase your immune system and many more. Here are seven amazing health benefits of the wonderfully delicious pear.



Decreased risk of heart disease

A 2007 study published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition found that women who ate a diet high in fruits loaded with flavonoids such as pears and apples had a lower risk of coronary heart disease. The researchers found that these fruits (pears included) could decrease the risk of cardiovascular disease mortality, especially in postmenopausal women.

Decreased risk of stroke

A 2011 study published in Stroke: Journal of the American Heart Association demonstrated that eating white-fleshed fruits (like pears) can dramatically decrease an individual's risk of stroke. In the study, participants that ate more than 171 grams of white-fleshed fruit had a 52 percent decreased incidence of stroke compared to participants that ate less than 75 grams. The scientists hypothesized that this was due to the rich amount of fiber in these fruits along with their high flavonoid content.

Weight reduction

Pears pack a big punch for such a small size when it comes to fiber. For instance, you can get almost 20 percent of your daily allotment of fiber by eating one medium-sized pear. Fiber has been found to not only be associated with a lower risk of stroke and heart disease but also found to be a vital tool in weight management. Along with proper diet and exercise, eating pears can give you the fiber you need to help lose weight.

Increase your immune system

As mentioned earlier, pears are loaded with anti-oxidants in the form of flavonoids. This high anti-oxidant content can help bolster the immune system. If you feel a cold coming on, try eating a pear or drinking pear juice.

Colon health

The large fiber content of pears can also be very helpful for maintaining colon health. Likewise, the pectin content of pears can also act as a mild laxative during times of constipation.

Source of energy

Pears make a great source of energy. Because they are so convenient (fresh or canned) they can easily be packed in your kids (or your own) lunch to provide instant energy. The sugar in pears will help your body stabilize your blood sugar and provide energy.

Reduction in inflammation

Pears have also been found to be a natural way to reduce inflammation. Their high content of the flavonoid quercetin, has been found to significantly reduce inflammation. This can be beneficial to combat many inflammatory ailments from the hardening of the arteries to fibromyalgia.

— naturalnews.com, J. Anderson, 11 February 2014



Recipe of the Month

Pear Cream

1/2 c raw cashews
1 t vanilla (opt)
1-2 T honey (opt)
4 c pears, cooked or preserved

Blend together all ingredients until smooth. May need to **add** a little water to help blend. Yield: 4 c.

