



Vegan kids

Dear Editor, It's tragic to see any child's health put at risk, particularly by his or her parents. The recent high-publicity case in which two parents in Sydney were found guilty of letting their daughter become malnourished is but one example among many in which children's dietary needs have been neglected by their parents. In a staggering number of cases that go unreported, parents feed their children unhealthy foods – to the point that over a quarter of Australian children are overweight or obese – and fail to provide them with the recommended quantities of vitamins, minerals, and fibre. Sensational headlines aside, the child in this case was malnourished not because one parent was vegan but because of what the judge called "the abandonment of parental responsibility". Obviously, parents must give their children nutritious food in adequate quantities and ensure that they're reaching developmental milestones, and it's very easy to do this as part of a balanced vegan lifestyle. Indeed, thousands of conscientious parents have raised or are currently raising healthy vegan children. The Australian National Health and Medical Research Council states in its dietary guidelines, "Appropriately planned vegetarian diets, including total vegetarian or vegan diets, are healthy and nutritionally adequate. Well-planned vegetarian diets are appropriate for individuals during all stages of the lifecycle." Vegan foods, which are cholesterol-free, generally low in saturated fat, and rich in complex carbohydrates, protein, fibre, and other nutrients, are optimal for children. The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine points out that most kids' diets are lacking not in animal-derived foods but rather in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and other plant-based foods that have protective effects against the world's top killers, including heart disease. We owe it to our children to teach them healthy eating habits and ensure they receive adequate food. When children raised on an abundance of healthy fruits, vegetables, pulses, and grains become old enough to learn the truth about the appalling suffering of animals in the meat, egg, and dairy industries and the toll these industries take on the environment, they'll thank us for bringing them up vegan. Sincerely, Mimi Bekhechi Campaigns Adviser People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals Australia PO Box 20308 World Square Sydney NSW 2002 (08) 8556 5828

Contacts

Desmond Bellamy
+61411577416
mailto: