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# The Health Reformer

## ***Popular church doctrine leads many to commit suicide***

Suicide is a tragic and potentially preventable public health problem. In 2000, suicide was the 11th leading cause of death in the U.S ... Suicide deaths outnumber homicide deaths by five to three. It has been estimated that there may be from eight to 25 attempted suicides per every one suicide death. The alarming numbers of suicide deaths and attempts emphasize the need for carefully designed prevention efforts. *National Institute of Mental Health*

Now, well-known risk factors for suicide are chronic depression, drug abuse, and physical or sexual abuse. But did you know that a popular church doctrine is also a culprit?

The fact is that many churches teach that at death people are immediately transported to the abodes of bliss in heaven (the doctrine of the immortality of the soul). People who commit self-murder are commonly eulogized by their friends and the minister, and carried directly to heaven at their death. This teaching about the state of the dead has led many to commit suicide. The false belief of rejoining someone who has died when one commits suicide is a predisposing factor in both youth and elderly suicides.

Fortunately, not all churches teach this doctrine. Here is what a church author has to say about this kind of theology:

This is Satan's own doctrine, and it does his work effectually. Should we be surprised that, with such instruction, wickedness abounds?

..If it were true that the souls of all men passed directly to heaven at the hour of dissolution, then we might well covet death rather than life. Many have been led by this belief to put an end to their existence. When overwhelmed with trouble, perplexity, and disappointment, it seems an easy thing to break the brittle thread of life and soar away into the bliss of the eternal world.

*The Great Controversy, pp. 538, 539*

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## ***Smoking Outdoors Still Harms Children***

Even though parents may take their smoking outside, new research shows that it doesn't prevent their children from being exposed to nicotine...

Researchers at Linköping University in Sweden measured the nicotine levels in urine samples of children whose parents smoked outdoors with the door closed and compared them to children of nonsmokers.

They found that children whose parents smoked outside had twice as much cotinine, a chemical formed when the body breaks down nicotine, in their body as the other children. Cotinine levels were lower than among children whose parents smoked indoors, however.

"This study shows that despite parents smoking outside for the sake of their children's health, inadvertent exposure still occurs," said Naj Dehlavi, a researcher with Action on Smoking and Health. "There really is no substitute for giving up smoking altogether -- it's a win-win situation for the whole family." *JTO, 2/11/2004*

## ***The Good and the Bad About Low Carb Diets***

A recent survey now estimates that 24 million Americans are now on a "low carbohydrate diet". Doctors warn that a high saturated fat diet low in whole grains, fruits, and vegetables is not balanced and may lead to heart and kidney disease. Cutting out unhealthy carbs (soda pop, white bread, snacks, chips etc.) is admirable but for good health the body needs healthy carbs (whole grains, brown rice, vegetables, legumes, and fresh fruit) daily.

*Wall Street Journal, Feb. 19, 2004*

## ***Let thirst be your guide, not the old "eight to nine glasses a day" rule***

A new report by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies says that most healthy Americans meet their daily hydration needs by letting thirst be their guide, rather than by following the old "eight to nine glasses a day" rule.

....They [the panel] say that although low intake of water has been associated with some chronic diseases, there is not enough evidence to establish water intake recommendations as a means to reduce the risks of chronic disease.

"We don't offer any rule of thumb based on how many glasses of water people should drink each day because our hydration needs can be met through a variety of sources in addition to drinking water," says panel chairman Lawrence Appel, MD, MPH, in a news release. "While drinking water is a frequent choice for hydration, people also get water from juice, milk, ... soda, fruits, vegetables, and other foods and beverages as well.

"Moreover, we concluded that on a daily basis, people get adequate amounts of water from normal drinking behavior -- consumption of beverages at

(over, please)

meals and in other social situations -- and by letting their thirst guide them," says Appel, who is also professor of medicine, epidemiology, and international health at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

Following your thirst may work for healthy, sedentary adults, but experts say there are also important exceptions to that rule.

"If you're active, participating in exercise, living in an environment that's a little bit warmer or drier, then I think you'll have to look at more physiological signs as opposed to looking at thirst," says Jackie Berning, PhD, RD, spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association.

"You have to look at the color of your urine," says Berning, who is associate professor of nutrition at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. "If it's that dark apple juice color, then despite the fact that you're not thirsty, you've got to put more fluids in."

Berning says that among active people, dehydration is the No. 1 danger she sees. If someone is not optimally hydrated, any type of stress, such as a change in altitude, activity, or temperature, could put their health at risk. ....

*By Jennifer Warner, WebMD Medical News*

### ***America's Restaurants Should Make Menus More Kid-Healthy***

For kids, healthy eating is a laughing matter in America's restaurants. Most kids' menus offer little more than burgers, fried chicken fingers, and fries -- and serve up "stunning" amounts of calories and bad fat, says a new report.

The whistle-blowers at the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) ... are now reporting on children's meals at the biggest table-service restaurants.

These include chains like Outback Steakhouse, Applebee's, Chili's, Red Lobster, Macaroni Grill, Cracker Barrel, Olive Garden, and Denny's.

Kids who eat a Boomerang Cheese Burger, fries, Coke, and Spotted Dog Sundae at Outback Steakhouse will eat a "stunning" 1,700-calorie meal and 58 grams of saturated and/or trans fat, writes lead researcher Jayne G. Hurley, a CSPI nutritionist.

"That's 3 1/2 days' worth of artery gunk -- even more than an order of fettuccine Alfredo," she writes. "Shouldn't parents know that their kids are eating a 'heart attack on a plate?'"

In fact, kids' meals serve up a fat-and-calorie count that is nearly worse than a fast-food chain, writes Hurley. Yet in these same restaurants, adults are offered "healthy eating" menus...

"Many parents surely appreciate the kid-friendly atmosphere and free crayons at places like Applebee's, but not many would expect adult-sized calorie counts in a children's meal," Hurley says in a news release.

"These chains should be encouraging kids to eat some of the healthy dishes they offer adults, but instead their kids' menus primarily feature oversized portions of burgers, fries, and fried chicken fingers. Now, kids come to expect that kind of junk food at school and at home."

#### **The Details**

Hurley and her team surveyed 20 of America's biggest chain restaurants that offer kids' menus. They published their report in the CSPI's Nutrition Action Newsletter, released today.

The CSPI found dramatic nutritional differences among similar-sounding menu items at different chains, underscoring the need for nutritional information on chain restaurant menus,

they write.

"If kids' menus have room for puzzles, mazes, word games, and advertising, surely they have enough room for some basic nutritional information" says CSPI Executive Director Michael F. Jacobson in the news release.

French fries, chicken fingers, burgers, and grilled cheese sandwiches -- which make up the bulk of kids' menus -- have enough calories, bad fats, and salt to make a fast-food burger meal look like fairly healthy eating, Hurley reports.

Fried chicken (fingers or nuggets) was on every one of the kids' menus; 85% of menus offered burgers. French fries or hash browns were also on every menu.

"In fact, at almost half the chains, fries were the only side dish on the kids' menus," writes Hurley. "Most chains allow you to substitute a (hopefully better) side dish for the fries if you ask -- but only nine of the 20 menus offered."

"Extras make it worse," she adds. Kids' meals often come with free (fatty) biscuits or corn bread and a free dessert or beverage.

In their analysis, Hurley's experts compared the meals against the 1,500 total calorie limit suggested by the USDA. This leaves room for only 17 grams of harmful (saturated and/or trans) fats.

"One look at the numbers and it's easy to see why most kids swallow nearly twice as many calories at a restaurant as they do when they eat at home," she writes.

....It's time for America's restaurants "to realize that their family friendly reputations aren't worth the crayons and color-your-own placemats that are handed at the door," she adds. "It's time to focus on kids' healthy eating choices, rather than offering them the cheapest fattening foods."

*By Jeanie Lerche Davis, WebMD Medical News*

### ***Non-smoking areas give little to no protection from the dangers of second-hand smoke***

Designated no smoking areas give little to no protection from the dangers of inhaling tobacco smoke, a new study has claimed.

Researchers in Australia concluded such areas in clubs and restaurants at most halve the levels of second-hand smoke inhaled.

They say current regulations allowing smoking on premises are "ineffective" in protecting people from passive smoking - a conclusion backed by UK anti-smoking campaigners.

The research carried out in 17 social and gaming clubs in and around Sydney measured the amount of "environmental tobacco smoke" in smoking and non-smoking areas as well as outside.

Their findings, published in this month's Tobacco Control journal, showed levels of atmospheric nicotine and particulate matter, a potentially carcinogenic pollutant in smoke, were substantially (53 per cent and 52 per cent) lower in non-smoking areas.

But they also found the levels of reduction varied hugely and having a separate non-smoking room made little difference to the reduction in nicotine and particulate matter.

...Ian Willmore of ASH said: "This research confirms what we really knew, that designated smoking areas do not protect the public from second-hand smoke and of course, still leave employees exposed. *By Stuart Coles, PA News*

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