

# Catching It From All Sides

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## Goodbye carbs and salt and the fun-eatin' life; hello vegetables

Pretty much every one of us has grown up with an overweight classmate. Whether the person was your friend or the kid everyone made fun of, every class had one poor soul.

That's the secret word, here: "One." Really? I think so. Growing up I don't recall all that many children in my grade school classes who were overweight. We moved a few times when I was young, so I had a great opportunity to see more than just one homeroom of, let's see, Kindergarten, fourth grade, sixth grade, ninth grade, tenth grade, and twelfth grade. Yeah, I told you we moved. Actually, some of those were just school transfers: public to parochial and parochial to public. At the time it was tough, but the diversity gave me an education far beyond the normal academics of a school-age kid.

It was a rare sight in the 70s to see an overweight child—not to mention an obese child. Sadly enough, I've learned a startling statistic for our own area in Minnesota. According to some medical professionals that I know, the childhood obesity rate isn't one out of every three students—it may be worse in some parts of our state. In some classrooms in our schools, statistics have shown it's three out of four students who have weight problems that need to be addressed.

The problem is leaving many school dieticians scratching their heads, trying to find a balance between the kids eating healthy and the kids eating period. Kids actually choose to go hungry before they'll eat anything they dislike.

I was told by one person in the medical field that carbohydrates are the worst for young children in schools, yet that's what they are finding in the school cafeterias. Well, truth be told, of course there are carbohydrates being served in schools, they're in everything: hotdishes, pastas, and breads. In short, it's the white stuff.

A few weeks ago I heard a man on a radio talk show talking about the "White Diet." He basically said that everything that's white—don't eat it. Good grief. What a sad outlook for mealtime; however, I think he's right.

As explained to me by a friend, carbohydrates to children, such as kids in school, spike their energy levels practically immediately. It makes their body's insulin pump kick in overtime. I can see how this could be. What I remember from grade school is that breads are the easiest foods for a person's saliva to begin changing into sugar for the body to process.

I can handle vegetables and meats without a problem, but life gets a little boring after eating salads. The fact remains, people need to focus on proteins instead of carbohydrates.

In grade school I could never understand why any kid, usually sitting across from me at the lunch table, would eat the center of a piece of butter bread but not the crust. Now we're told we shouldn't eat any bread at all. I remember pizza was everybody's favorite. Now it looks like thin crust is the best.

If a person gains only one pound every year, starting when they're 20 years old, that's not too bad, right? The truth is, it'll add up to one day having 40 years around the middle of a 60-year-old man.

When I was in my early 20s, my buddies and I would hit Burger King in New Ulm, the old location, a few times a week after work. I could pound down two double Whoppers and a large fry and a couple glasses of pop. When I turned 23, it was all over for that. Things change—I changed. Metabolism accounts for much of how we keep fit and trim. Most importantly, physical activity is a must.

I remember one particular "Little House on the Prairie" episode where an obese man came to their town looking for work. The children had never before seen someone with such a weight problem.

It was somewhat like this while I was going through school. I've noticed what everyone's talking about these last 10 to 15 years: we truly have a problem on our hands in country with people and their weight.

There's no better time than today to start eating healthier. I found out on Wednesday at the Health Fair at the Middle School that it's not funny to scare a school nurse with one's blood pressure. I had no idea, and now I need to change—PDQ.