

Is eating beef necessary?

By Vince & Yolanda
Special to Sentinel-Voice

If you eat beef sensibly there is no reason you cannot include it in your diet. Four ounces of cooked lean beef contains one quarter of your daily requirements for iron, 40 percent of zinc and 75 percent of the B vitamins. That same four ounces contains 24 grams of protein, which is half the daily protein requirement for most people and contains only 200 to 300 calories. To get this amount of nutrition from chicken or turkey you would have to eat twice as much.

People who exercise have a greater need for iron. Iron is a mineral found in every living cell in the body. One of its major functions is to combine with protein and copper to make hemoglobin.

Does this mean you have to eat beef? Dietary facts suggest just that. When a group of female exercisers who ate beef were compared to a similar group of non-beef eaters, they found that the non-beef eaters had problems with low iron levels. During the experiment, the non-beef eaters ate vegetables high in nonheme iron. Some non-beef eaters also took an iron supplement. However, neither of these efforts made a difference in the iron level of the non-beef eaters.

The iron from vegetables is a nonheme form of iron. This iron can be used by the body, but not as easily as the iron found in beef and other meats. The iron found in meats is a heme form. Good usable iron is also found in chicken and fish, but beef still provides the most. However, before you go out and buy a side of beef, check with someone who can measure the amount of iron you already have in your diet.

Four ounces of lean beef will give you most of the iron you need. You don't need a whole steak.

The most common disease related to a low iron level is iron-deficiency anemia. The symptoms of this anemia may include constipation, depression, brittle nails and difficulty breathing. Taking in too much iron is usually associated with taking an iron supplement. This can cause toxic poisoning. Ingesting too much nonheme iron can also lead to cirrhosis of the liver, diabetes and pancreas insufficiency for some people.

The suggested daily iron intake is 18 milligrams for women and 10 milligrams for men. Active people may need more. The need for iron increases during menstruation, periods of rapid growth, pregnancy or whenever there

is a heavy loss of blood.

Most people avoid beef because of the fat content. Between 1976 and 1984 the consumption of beef fell 17 percent because of this fact. Though once true, the fat content of beef has decreased about six to 27 percent. You can also reduce the fat content of your beef purchase by buying the right cut of meat.

When you buy beef, choose the lean cuts of meat Flank Steak, Top Round and Ground Sirloin. "Select" is the best grade of meat, next comes "Choice" and then "Prime." By choosing "Select" you reduce the fat by 15 percent. Meats with less fat tends to dry out fast during cooking, so you should boil them before cooking and marinate in your favorite low sodium sauce.

You can reduce the fat (See Beef, Page 14)



Jimmy Banks, of Jimmy's Westside Market, uses fresh sirloin to make ground beef. Photo by Savoy/LVS-Voice

Good nutrition helps reverse Rett

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Aggressive nutritional intervention early on can help reverse growth abnormalities in girls suffering from Rett syndrome, a recent study has found.

Rett syndrome is a disabling developmental disease that strikes only females. Girls stop growing at around 18 months of age, and may develop mental retardation, display repetitive, involuntary movements involving their hands, feet and other parts of their body. They may have experience problems, walking, breathing and communicating.

The study, done at the USDA's Children Nutrition Research Center, looked at 16 girls with Rett syndrome and 12 healthy girls between 4 and 13 years of age.

"We found the Rett girls to be malnourished," says Dr. Kathleen Motil, an assistant professor pediatrics at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. "We believe the poor diet, rather than the repetitive movements, leads to the girls' altered energy balance and subsequent growth failure."

Rett girls do not eat as much as healthy girls because it is difficult for them to chew and

swallow their food. For this year-long study, ten Rett girls were fed through a button gastrostomy, a device placed directly into the stomach.

"They were given a high quality liquid formula, nearly twice the normal amount of food they would normally consume," Motil said. "All the girls gained weight and grew in height."

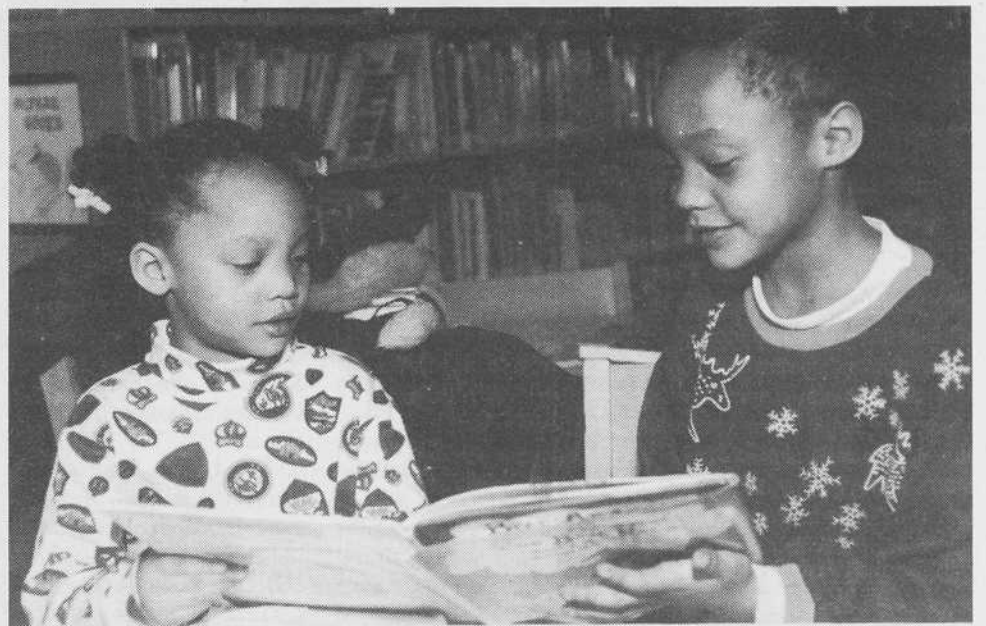
However, Motil says, the girls gained more body fat than lean body mass (muscle mass). She says the lean body mass deficits of some Rett girls are so great it may take more than a year to completely replete them. She believes after that time they may lose the excess body fat.

The study also found Rett girls, despite constant movements, expend less energy than healthy girls. This is blamed on smaller amounts of lean body mass, which is the portion of the body that burns energy.

Parents should seek out nutritional advice early on to combat the growth abnormalities.

"After being fed, some Rett girls started crawling better," Motil said. "They were less irritable and their outlook was brighter, which leads to a better quality of life for both parent and child."

HEALTH



Shauntesa White, 3, and her sister, Shaniqa, 5, spend time in the West Las Vegas Library. Children learn lifelong behaviors, like appreciating reading, early on from parents.

Photo by Savoy/LVS-Voice

CHILDWATCH

A lesson on raising moral children

By Marian Wright Edelman
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Pulitzer prize-winning author Robert Coles, who has written dozens of important works about children, including "Children in Crisis" and "The Spiritual Life of Children," has presented us with yet another literary gift. In his latest book, "The Moral Intelligence of Children," Coles helps us think about a question that we, as parents, teachers and community members struggle with daily: "How do we help our children grow up to be kind, moral citizens?"

When I was growing up, my parents, grandparents, neighbors, teachers, and ministers never hesitated to point out the differences between good and bad behavior. Adults were not afraid to teach moral lessons, and we understood the importance of learning them. Coles reminds us that these lessons are not only relevant in today's society, but are crucial to rebuilding the moral fabric of our communities and raising children who understand the value of caring for others.

This book illustrates that children learn by example, and they understand the difference between words and deeds. As a 13-year-old boy in "The Moral Intelligence of Children" explains, "You should be out there doing something about it, what you believe is right, is good and not just talking it up." The boy says he learned this idea from his dad.

In addition to living our values, we must also talk frankly to our children about moral choices, interacting with them at their level about how we should treat others. The reader is offered examples of how to teach these lessons at

every stage of a child's development. The mother of a 7-year-old boy is praised for gently showing her son that he should hand her his empty bottle rather than throwing it on the floor. The author suggests that the parents and teacher of a 9-year-old girl caught cheating and taunting her classmates with the success of her deception might engage in a direct conversation about good behavior, even if they chosenot to punish her. Finally, he explains how adolescents facing the pressures of drugs and premature sexual activity may require our moral

guidance for their very survival.

Coles also reminds us that we must listen to our children and let them explain what motivates their behaviors. We should not always assume we can judge their moral character by appearances alone. He tells us about a boy who bullied other children into doing what he wanted. In many ways, he appeared to be a "bad" child. So when Coles interviewed the boy, he asked him what he thought it meant to be a good person. The boy said, "someone who gets the job" (See Childwatch, Page 12)

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