



THE IRRESISTIBLE RISE AND RISE OF WOMENOMICS IN

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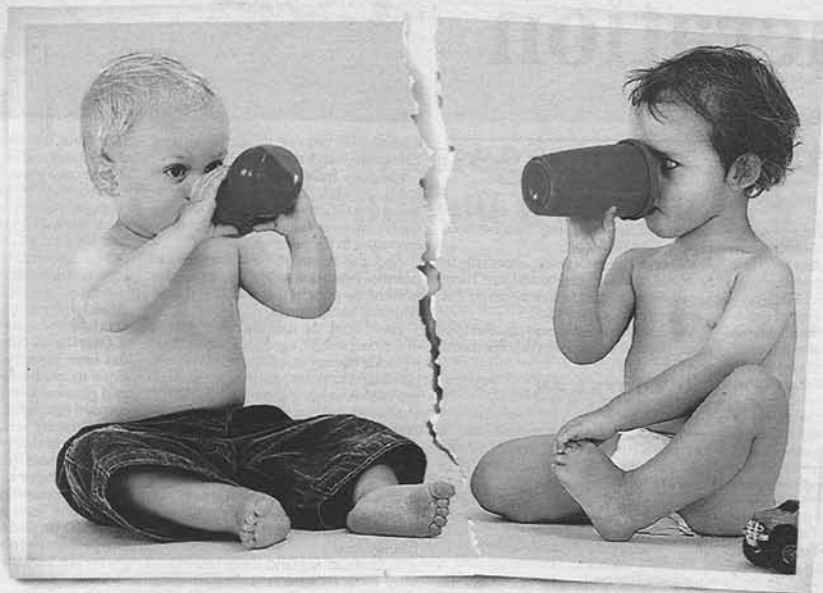
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A CONSPIRACY THEORIST GETS HIS DAY IN COURT

HOW PRINCE CHARLES, TONY BLAIR, MI5, MI6 AND 'NAZI' PRINCE PHILIP MURDERED DIANA AND DODI, BY MOHAMED AL-FAYED PAGES 14 & 15

Diet – a social divide that starts aged two



66% of children of ill-educated mothers get sweets and sugary drinks every day

37% of children of well-educated mothers get sweets and sugary drinks every day

BY FIONA MACLEOD, PAGES 2 & 3

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NEWS

Rock will be public for several years

■ Northern Rock will be held in public ownership for years to come and even then nationalisation may not work, its new boss admitted. *Pages 667*

FEATURES



BLU-RAY AND NEW AGE DVD

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOU? PAGES 10-11

SPORT

Captain White losing fight to face Ireland

■ Injury set to rule Jason White, Scotland rugby skipper, out of the Six Nations game at Croke Park in Dublin on Saturday. *Page 72*

Millions are spent on ads like this ...



healthyliving

Adverts funded by the taxpayer promote healthy eating

... unheeded by junk food generation

CHILDREN under the age of two are regularly eating sugary foods and drinks as an established part of their diet, a major study has warned.

And in a stark illustration of a growing social divide, the Scottish Government report linked poverty and a low level of a parental education to the amount of sugary snacks families give their children.

The survey found 66 per cent of children whose mothers had no qualifications ate sweets and chocolate once a day or more – but only 37 per cent of youngsters whose mothers had Higher grades or above had such foods daily.

Growing Up in Scotland, a survey of more than 7,000 parents designed to create the most comprehensive overview of childhood in Scotland, also revealed that 23 per cent of youngsters aged under four were overweight.

The latest findings come just months after a major international study placed Scotland second only to the United States among the world's developed nations for obesity.

The Growing Up in Scotland survey also showed 90 per cent of children ate sweets or chocolates at least once a week, and 43 per cent once a day or more.

And although 85 per cent of respondents said they had received information on children's diets and healthy eating, only 11 per cent said what they gave their children to eat depended on their knowledge of healthy cooking.

Experts expressed alarm and warned parents were storing up major problems for the future health of their youngsters.

FIONA MACLEOD
EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

Nutritionist Carina Norris urged action to end the "worrying" link between poverty and poor diet.

She said: "It's something, especially in Scotland, that we need to address. There are whole areas of the country where it is harder to find healthy food."

She described the amount of sugar consumed by children as a sign that the diet of

SCOTSMAN COMMENT

Not to put too fine a point on it – and despite all the warnings – we are killing our children with the confectionery and drinks we feed them.

PAGE 29

the youngest Scots was "going off the rails". She said: "Usually, children get more overweight as they get older, so to actually find that high percentage at such a young age is very worrying."

Ms Norris also urged action be taken to find out why the healthy eating message was not being listened to.

She said: "There's a real need to know why these people are not following the advice because we so desperately need them to do so."

Growing Up in Scotland drew a link between lack of activity and the obesity "epi-

EARLY HABITS THAT DIE HARD

1/4 of youngsters aged under four are overweight.

66% of children whose mothers have no qualifications eat sweets and chocolate at least once a day (compared to 37% whose mothers have Higher grades or above).

85% of parents have received information or advice on children's diets and healthy eating.

4 out of 10 parents blame grandparents for feeding children sugary treats.

1 in 17 children eat no vegetables in a typical day.

1 in 33 have no fruit.

43% of youngsters have sweets or chocolates once a day or more.

90% have sweets or chocolates at least once a week.

9 out of 10 children eat crisps or savoury snacks at least once a week (almost half eat these at least once a day).

7 out of 10 of the youngsters who eat sweets or chocolates every day also have crisps or a savoury snack on a daily basis.



demic" – 63 per cent of children aged 22 months watch television every day.

Children from lower-income households, or with parents without educational qualifications, were also more likely to demonstrate difficult behaviour, according to the research.

And the report warned the level of parental education needed to be raised to prevent the poor health of children from deprived backgrounds.

Hazel Ross, the national co-ordinator of Counterweight, a group set up in 2000 to tackle obesity in adults, said it was expanding efforts this year to help the children of overweight parents.

Ms Ross said that what happened in the home had more influence on the way children ate than any messages coming from nurseries or schools.

But as parents struggled to eat more fruit and vegetables and give up fatty, sugary snacks themselves, they still were allowing their offspring to have unhealthy food.

"I know in England there has been a huge focus on schools and vending machines, but my argument would be you have to start in the home, because by the time the kids get to school they already have their habits developed," said Ms Ross.

She warned of the persistent myth that growing children would easily burn off high-calorie food, adding: "Clearly we are finding they are not running it off as they once would have done when they were perhaps more active."

The report found that 43.2 per cent of the children surveyed, who were all aged

under four, had sweets or chocolates once a day or more, while 90 per cent had these at least once a week.

In addition, 90 per cent of children ate crisps or savoury snacks at least once a week, with 45.6 per cent eating these at least once a day.

The Scottish Government has launched a Scottish Diet Action Plan to improve the nation's health, alongside a national physical-activity strategy called Let's make Scotland more Active.

Over the next three years, £56.5 million has been promised for initiatives dedicated to tackling obesity, healthy eating and physical activity, including "family-focused intervention".

An obesity action plan will be published early this year, providing further details of these initiatives.

Adam Ingram, Scotland's children's minister, yesterday said the number of youngsters eating junk food was "a serious concern". He said that tackling the "serious problem" of obesity was a high priority for the Scottish Government.

Jamie Stone, the Liberal Democrat health spokesman, called for more support for parents to encourage their children to eat healthily.

This is the first time that questions about diet have been included in the Growing Up in Scotland survey – which is tracking some 8,000 families.

Researchers spoke to parents who had children aged almost two years and also to those whose children were aged just under four.

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85% of youngsters eat at least two different types of fruit a day. (70% have at least two types of vegetables).

23% of the children in the study are either overweight or obese, with girls more likely to fall into this category than boys.

2/3 of parents classed their child's health as very good (about one quarter describing it as good).

94% of the older children surveyed attend pre-school or nursery.

4 out of 5 of children surveyed look at books or read stories every day.

These youngsters, pictured at Salisbury Craggs, may get a balanced diet, but tens of thousands of other children are not so lucky
Picture: Sean Bell

We are great believers that if you put out fruit children will eat it

HEALTHY food choices for their two daughters come naturally to Jo Duncan, who is a GP, and her husband, Ross.

The Edinburgh couple have been taking part in the Growing Up in Scotland survey since it began in 2005. Their daughters, Isla, three, and Maisie, two, are rarely given unhealthy snacks.

Mr Duncan, 32, said: "We agreed to take part in the survey because we wanted to help out and we were happy to give our perspective of what it's like bringing up our girls. They rarely get any kind of sugary sweets. We only give them chocolate every now and again.

"They might get a little bit of chocolate a couple of times a week, but we don't buy them a big bar; we just give them a couple of chocolate pennies, or something like that."

Mr Duncan said that both the girls were a healthy weight for their age.

He said: "If they have toast, we will give them butter, because it is good for them to have some

CASE STUDY

FIONA MACLEOD

fats. And obviously they have full-fat milk. But the kind of foods they tend to eat are lots of pasta dishes and stews.

"We tend to make everything ourselves, so we don't buy ready-meals for them."

However, he believes their example is atypical of parents with young children.

Mr Duncan said: "If you go out, you tend to see other parents putting crisps and chocolate out for the children to nibble on.

"We are great believers that if you put out fruit the children will eat it.

"The girls went to a pantomime recently and all the mothers had chocolate for their kids, but Jo just had fruit for ours," he said.

"Fortunately, Isla isn't interested in all the rubbish the other kids were eating; she was quite happy having her fruit."

Mr Duncan believes that a lot of parents feel they have to give their children treats to keep them happy.

However, he did not believe that was necessary, saying: "It just goes the other way; it makes it more difficult."

The girls also rarely watch television, unlike most of the children whose parents were surveyed.

"They hardly ever watch it, really. Maisie just doesn't watch it at all because we never really put it on," Mr Duncan said.

"They play together quite well, although Isla's going through a phase when she might watch 15-20 minutes of *Stuart Little* before she goes to bed.

"They don't watch anything during the day, because usually Jo is out and about with them and getting them involved in doing things."

In their spare time, the family enjoy walking in the countryside because the girls like seeing the horses and sheep in the fields.

Health-conscious: Jo and Ross Duncan with their children Isla, three, and Maisie, two