

Obesity Fuels Their Fervor

By ACSH Staff — July 26, 2004

A July 26 *Los Angeles Times* article by Johanna Neuman about the Center for Science in the Public Interest notes ACSH's take on them:

Not everyone is convinced that the food crusaders have the answer to excess poundage. At the American Council on Science and Health, a New York-based consumer education consortium, Dr. Elizabeth Whelan and her colleagues favor "variety, balance and moderation" in eating. "Twinkies and milk after school is not a crime when it is a snack in an otherwise balanced diet," she said. "But food has become very mystical. Everybody who eats three times a day thinks they are an expert."

...But Dr. Ruth Kava, a nutritionist who works with Whelan at the American Council on Science and Health, said she thinks much of the zeal is misguided. To tax so-called junk foods, she argued, ignores the issue of calories and balance.

"There's a bandwagon on vending machines in schools, but unless you're putting in water and diet soda, it's misleading," she said. "Eight ounces of juice has 120 calories, just like eight ounces of cola." And to sue food companies or restaurants for their products, she said, ignores the fact that eating is different from smoking.

"There's a difference between food and tobacco," she said at a recent National Press Club debate on food and personal responsibility. "Nobody needs tobacco to live."

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