

The Negative Impact of Giving Instant Food to Children: A Review of Literature Studies on Health Risks

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the negative impacts of instant food consumption on children's health. Instant food is often consumed because of its ease of preparation, but its nutritional content is not balanced. The method used is a review of literature studies from various health journals, nutrition articles, and reports from international health organizations such as WHO. The literature reviewed focuses on the impact of instant food consumption on children's physical and mental health. The results of the study show that instant foods that are high in salt, sugar, fat, and preservatives can cause various health problems, such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and cognitive development disorders. In addition, high levels of sodium and trans fat in instant foods can affect the body's metabolic function, increasing the risk of chronic diseases later in life. Lack of fiber intake in instant foods also contributes to digestive problems and lack of essential nutrients for children. Therefore, it is important for parents to be more selective in choosing the food consumed by children. Reducing the consumption of instant foods and replacing them with more nutritious foods is very necessary to support optimal child growth and development.

Keywords : Instant food, child health, obesity, diet, literature review.

INTRODUCTION

In this modern era, children's eating patterns are increasingly influenced by the development of a fast and practical era. Providing instant food is a solution that is widely chosen by parents because it is considered efficient in meeting children's daily food needs (Dariyo, A. 2021). Nowadays, everything is known to be fast and practical. The development of technology, modern lifestyle, and increasing busyness make many people, especially parents, look for more efficient ways to carry out their daily activities. One aspect that is influenced by this change is in terms of fulfilling food needs, especially



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for children. Providing instant food is a solution that is widely chosen by parents because it can save time and energy (Safitri, E. 2019). Instant food is easy to get, quick to prepare, and has a fairly long shelf life. This is very helpful for parents who are busy working or have a busy schedule, because they no longer need to spend a lot of time preparing food from scratch. However, although practical, excessive consumption of instant food can cause several health problems, such as incomplete nutritional content and high salt, fat, and preservatives. Therefore, although instant food offers convenience, it is important for parents to still pay attention to nutritional balance and provide a variety of healthy foods for their children. Ultimately, even though these practical solutions make things easier, parents still need to be wise in choosing instant foods that are not only practical but also nutritious for children's growth and development (ARUM, ER 2023).

Instant foods, such as instant noodles, frozen foods, and other ready-to-eat foods, offer convenience and comfort in serving. Because they are practical and fast, these foods are the choice of many people, especially for those who have limited time or are very busy. However, behind its convenience, instant foods often contain chemicals and additives such as preservatives, food coloring, artificial sweeteners, and flavorings. These substances are added to extend the shelf life and enhance the taste, but can be harmful to health if consumed in the long term. In addition, instant foods generally contain high levels of sodium and trans fats, which can increase the risk of hypertension, heart disease, and diabetes. For children who are growing, dependence on instant foods can hinder their development due to a lack of essential nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, and fiber. These bad eating habits can also affect the immune system and increase its susceptibility to disease. Although instant foods offer convenience, it is important for parents to pay attention to their children's nutritional intake by providing healthy and nutritious foods to support their long-term growth and health (Shintia Rifai, B. 2021).

Providing instant food to children is not only a matter of convenience, but also a big challenge for parents in maintaining a healthy and nutritious diet. Although practical and fast, instant foods often contain high levels of salt, sugar, and fat. Excess salt, for example, can increase the risk of hypertension and kidney disorders in children, while excessive sugar consumption can cause obesity, metabolic disorders, and increase the risk of type 2 diabetes. High saturated fat or trans fat in instant foods can also damage children's heart health in the long term. The problem becomes more serious because children have specific nutritional needs to support their optimal growth and development. During growth, children need balanced nutrition, such as protein, vitamins, minerals, and fiber, to strengthen the immune system, support brain development, and maintain physical growth. Instant foods that generally lack these important nutrients can inhibit these processes. In addition, children who are accustomed to consuming instant foods tend to be less interested in healthy foods such as vegetables, fruits, and more nutritious natural protein sources (Widodo, DL, & Sumanto, A. 2020).

Poor eating habits from an early age can form long-term habits that are harmful to children's health. Unhealthy eating habits, such as consuming too much instant food, can affect children's eating habits in the future. Children who are accustomed to consuming foods that are high in salt, sugar, and fat, and low in nutrients, tend to choose similar foods as adults. This increases their risk of developing various health problems, such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease, which can last a lifetime (Fardlillah, Q., & Lestari, YE 2024). In addition, children who are accustomed to eating

instant food or fast food may also not acquire good eating habits, such as consuming fresh foods, such as vegetables, fruits, and healthy proteins. Malnutrition that occurs during growth can hinder children's physical and mental development, reduce their ability to learn, and weaken their immune systems, making them more susceptible to disease (Eriana, E., Fauziddin, M., & Daulay, MI (2023).

Therefore, although instant food offers convenience and practicality, parents need to be wiser in choosing foods that are not only quick to prepare but also nutritious. Choosing balanced and nutrient-rich foods such as fruits, vegetables, grains, and healthy protein sources is very important to support optimal child growth and development. By introducing healthy eating habits from an early age, parents can help children build a good foundation of health for their future. (Bakhtiar, HS (2024). Children who often consume instant food are at higher risk of experiencing long-term health problems, such as obesity, diabetes, and hypertension. Several studies have also shown that children who are accustomed to instant food tend to have poor diets, which can interfere with the quality of nutrition their bodies need. Moreover, the habit of eating instant food in children can change their taste preferences, so they prefer unhealthy foods (Abel, AD, Nurdin, A., Fitria, U., & Dinen, KA (2024).

The habit of consuming instant food not only has an impact on children's physical health, but can also affect their mental and cognitive development. Instant food is generally low in vitamins, minerals, and essential fatty acids which are very important for brain development. Adequate nutrition, such as omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin B complex, and minerals such as iron and zinc, are needed to support optimal brain function, including for children's concentration, memory, and learning ability (Shintia Rifai, B. (2021). Without adequate nutritional intake, children can have difficulty maintaining focus, processing information, and remembering important things they learn. This can have a negative impact on their academic achievement. For example, deficiencies in certain vitamins and minerals can cause memory disorders or problems in processing information, which in turn affects children's ability to learn and develop optimally (Hadi, AJ (2021).

The childhood period is a very crucial time for brain development, because at this stage the child's brain develops very rapidly. During the early years of life, the child's brain experiences the formation and strengthening of connections between nerve cells that are very important for their cognitive, motor, and emotional abilities in the future. This is the period when the ability to learn, think, and adapt begins to form, so good nutrition greatly determines the quality of the child's brain development. At this time, the child's brain really needs various important nutrients to support this process, such as essential fatty acids (especially omega-3), protein, vitamins, and minerals. Omega-3 fatty acids, which can be found in fish and nuts, for example, play a role in the formation of brain cells and strengthen the child's memory and concentration abilities. B complex vitamins (such as B6, B12, and folic acid) are important for optimal brain function, because they help the energy metabolism process in the brain and repair brain tissue. Minerals such as iron and zinc also play a role in nerve development and improve children's cognitive abilities (Badi'ah, A., & Kp, S. 2023).

When children are provided with nutritious and nutrient-rich foods during their growing years, they will have a stronger physical and mental foundation. They are better able to learn, process information, and develop the thinking skills needed to face life's

challenges. Conversely, a lack of necessary nutrients can hinder their brain development, affecting their ability to concentrate, remember, and even affect their behavior. Therefore, providing nutritious food at an early age is not only to support physical growth, but also very important for brain development. Children who receive the right nutrition from an early age have a greater chance of growing well physically and mentally, which will have a positive impact on their cognitive abilities in the future. Foods that contain vitamins, minerals, and essential fatty acids can help improve children's memory, concentration, and ability to absorb information, which will have a positive impact on their academic achievement and overall cognitive development. (Azi, B., et al. 2024).

Thus, although instant foods offer convenience, parents need to consider their long-term impacts on children's mental and cognitive development. Choosing nutritious foods to support brain development is an important investment for children's future. In this article, we will review the various negative impacts of giving instant foods to children, as well as discuss some of the health risks that may arise from excessive consumption of instant foods. The main focus of this study is to identify the relationship between instant foods and health disorders that can affect children in the long term. It is important to note that children's eating patterns are greatly influenced by their social environment and parental habits. Therefore, interventions carried out by parents and educators are needed to reduce the consumption of instant foods in children and replace them with healthier and more nutritious food choices. Preventive measures taken early on will have a positive impact on children's long-term health. This article will also discuss various relevant literature studies regarding the negative impacts of instant foods on children's health. By collecting data from various reliable sources, it is hoped that this article can provide a better understanding of the importance of reducing the provision of instant foods in children's diets.

The purpose of this study is to provide a clear picture of how the habit of consuming instant food can contribute to the increasing prevalence of diseases related to unhealthy eating patterns among children. The results of this study are expected to be a reference for parents, educators, and related parties to be more concerned about children's nutrition.

METHOD

The method used in this study is a literature review, which is an approach that collects and analyzes data from various relevant written sources to answer research questions. The literature selection process in this study began by identifying publications that examine the negative impacts of instant food on children's health. The main focus is to select literature that provides reliable information and has good methodological quality. The sources used in this study include various health journals, articles discussing nutrition, and reports from international health organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and other institutions that focus on child health and diet (Pugu, MR, 2024).

Literature screening was carried out by selecting sources that had gone through a peer-reviewed process or had been published by credible institutions or agencies. The articles were then analyzed to find relevant findings on how instant food consumption can affect children's health, especially in terms of physical and mental development. In addition, reports from WHO and other health agencies provide a global perspective that

strengthens the findings in the literature, providing a deeper understanding of the long-term impacts of poor eating habits on children.

This literature review method helps to present a broader and evidence-based picture of the issue being studied, and allows for conclusions to be drawn based on the findings of previous studies. To identify relevant articles, we used inclusion criteria such as year of publication (2010 to 2024), topics focused on the impact of instant food, and the relevance of the study to children. The collected data were then analyzed to identify emerging patterns regarding the relationship between instant food consumption and health problems in children.

In addition, this study also discusses the results of research using quantitative and qualitative approaches, and links factors that influence children's eating habits. The analysis method used includes thematic synthesis to see the relationship between variables related to the negative impacts of giving instant food to children. The results obtained from this literature study are then processed to provide a better understanding of the dangers of excessive consumption of instant food in children and the long-term health implications that may arise.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Instant Food and Its Popularity Among Children

Instant food is a type of food that has been processed in such a way that it can be prepared quickly and easily. In Indonesia, instant food is very popular among children because of its delicious taste, ease of serving, and affordable price. Some examples of instant food that are widely consumed by children include instant noodles, chicken nuggets, instant sausages, instant meatballs, snacks, school snacks, and packaged sweet drinks. The popularity of instant food is also driven by attractive marketing strategies, such as advertisements on television and social media, striking packaging, and bonus toys in fast food products (Panjaitan, AN, et al. 2025).

The main reason children like instant food is because it tastes savory, crunchy, or sweet that suits their taste. In addition, this food is easy to find in stalls, school canteens, minimarkets, and street vendors. Instant noodles, for example, are a favorite of many children because they are available in various flavors and are easy to cook with just hot water. Meanwhile, instant chicken nuggets and sausages are often used as school supplies because they are practical and can be combined with various other foods. Fast foods such as fried chicken and burgers are also popular choices because of their distinctive taste and fast serving. However, behind its popularity, excessive consumption of instant food can have a negative impact on children's health. The high fat, salt, and sugar content in instant food can increase the risk of obesity and various diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure. In addition, the low fiber and vitamin content in instant food can cause digestive disorders and lack of nutritional intake needed for children's growth. The habit of consuming instant food can also make children less fond of healthy foods such as vegetables and fruits (Sutopo, D. 2021)

Therefore, it is important for parents and educators to monitor children's eating patterns so that they do not become too dependent on instant foods. Education about healthy eating patterns and the provision of more nutritious home-cooked food can be a solution to maintain the balance of their nutritional intake. Although instant foods offer

convenience, wise and balanced consumption is still needed so that children can grow healthily and optimally.

Table 1. A table showing some popular instant foods among children in Indonesia along with their popularity.

Instant Food	Description	Popularity
Instant Noodles	Instant noodles are noodles that can be prepared quickly and easily, usually only requiring hot water.	Instant noodles are very popular in Indonesia. According to a survey, 60.7% of Indonesians over the age of 3 years consume instant food, including instant noodles, about 1-6 times per week.
Chicken Nuggets	Chicken nuggets are pieces of chicken that are ground, seasoned, shaped, and breaded, then fried or baked.	Chicken nuggets are a practical choice for many families, especially working mothers, because they are easy to prepare and loved by children.
Instant Sausage	Instant sausages are sausages that have been cooked and can be consumed immediately or heated first.	Instant sausages are often used as school supplies or snacks because they are practical and liked by children.
Instant Meatballs	Instant meatballs are pre-cooked and packaged meatballs, usually only needing to be heated before serving.	Meatballs are one of school children's favorite snacks and can be found in various places, from restaurants to street vendors.
Fast food	Fast food such as burgers, fried chicken, and pizza served in franchise restaurants.	Fast food is very popular among young Indonesians because of its delicious taste and fast serving.
Light Snacks	Various light snacks such as chips, chiki balls, and other snacks that are packaged and ready to eat.	Light snacks with various flavors are loved by children, teenagers, and adults.
School Snacks	Various snacks are sold in the school environment, such as cubit cake, rolled eggs, and cireng.	School snacks such as kue cubit and cireng are very popular among children because they taste good and are affordable.
Packaged Sweet Drinks	Soft drinks with various flavors packaged in bottles or boxes.	Children are one of the groups that are quite exposed to sweet beverage products. A study shows that the majority of snacks sold in school canteens are high-fat and high-calorie foods and high-sugar drinks.

Based on the table shown, various types of instant food have a high level of popularity among children because of their practicality and preferred taste. Instant noodles are one of the most popular foods in Indonesia. According to a survey, around 60.7% of the Indonesian population, including children, consume instant noodles regularly, with an average consumption of 1.6 kilograms per month. Instant noodles are easy to prepare and have many flavors, making them a favorite choice for many people. In addition to instant noodles, chicken nuggets are also very popular because they are practical, can be stored for a long time, and are easy to fry as school supplies. Children like their crunchy texture and interesting variety of shapes. Instant sausages are also often consumed as snacks because they can be eaten directly without having to be cooked first. This makes them a practical choice for children while at school or at home. Instant meatballs are a favorite snack that is often consumed because they can be found in various places, from stalls to school canteens. Their savory taste and flexibility in serving make them even more popular.

Fast foods such as burgers, fried chicken, and French fries also have their own appeal to children. The deliciousness, ease of serving, and attractive marketing strategies, such as bonus toys in the food package, make them very popular. Snacks such as chips, biscuits, and other packaged snacks are also often consumed by children because they are available in various flavors and easy to buy at school or minimarkets. In addition, school snacks such as cilok, egg rolls, and cireng are also very popular because they are cheap and easy to find in the school environment. Not only food, packaged sweet drinks are also children's favorites. Drinks such as bottled tea, packaged milk, and soda have a sweet taste that is liked and are often consumed as a complement to food. However, consuming these drinks too often can have a negative impact because of their high sugar content, which can cause obesity and other health problems. Overall, instant foods have a great appeal to children because of their ease of consumption, wide availability, and attractive taste. However, excessive consumption can have a negative impact on health, especially if children do not consume other nutritious foods. Therefore, it is important for parents and educators to monitor children's diets to ensure they remain balanced and nutritious.

The results of this literature study indicate that consumption of instant food in children can increase the risk of obesity. Instant food contains high calories and is often low in fiber, which plays an important role in regulating body weight. Several studies have shown that children who consume instant food are more likely to be overweight than those who have a more balanced diet. The following is a table summarizing several literature studies examining the relationship between instant food consumption and the risk of obesity in children:

Table 2. Literature study examining the relationship between instant food consumption and the risk of obesity in children.

No	Judul Penelitian	Penulis dan Tahun	Metode Penelitian	Hasil dan Kesimpulan
1.	Risiko Obesitas pada Anak Akibat Konsumsi Fast Food dan Junk Food	Sari, 2021	Tinjauan Literatur	Konsumsi fast food dan junk food berkontribusi signifikan terhadap peningkatan risiko obesitas pada anak usia sekolah dasar
2.	Hubungan Konsumsi Makanan Ringan dan Minuman Manis dengan Obesitas Anak	Wulandari, 2021	Studi Kasus-Kontrol pada 46 anak sekolah dasar	Terdapat hubungan antara konsumsi makanan ringan dan minuman manis dengan kejadian obesitas pada anak sekolah dasar.
3.	Pola Konsumsi Makanan Jajanan di Sekolah Dapat Overweight/Obesitas pada Anak	Sari, 2018	Studi Cross-Sectional pada 112 anak sekolah	Konsumsi makanan jajanan seperti sirup buah, minuman perisa, dan gorengan berhubungan dengan kejadian overweight/obesitas pada anak sekolah.
4.	Literature Review: Hubungan Aktivitas Fisik dan Kebiasaan Konsumsi Fast Food dengan Obesitas pada Anak Sekolah Dasar	Ferdianti, 2021	Tinjauan Literatur	Kebiasaan konsumsi fast food dan aktivitas fisik rendah berkontribusi terhadap peningkatan prevalensi obesitas pada anak sekolah dasar.

This table shows that various studies have identified a relationship between the consumption of instant foods, fast foods, and junk foods with an increased risk of obesity in children. Factors such as high calorie intake, low fiber content, and unhealthy food consumption habits play a significant role in weight gain in children.

Nutritional Content in Instant Food

Instant foods generally contain various nutrients that provide energy and an attractive taste for consumers. One of the main ingredients in instant foods is carbohydrates, which come from flour or similar ingredients. These carbohydrates function as the main source of energy, but are often in the form of simple carbohydrates that are easily digested and can cause rapid spikes in blood sugar. In addition, instant foods also have a fairly high fat content, especially saturated fat and trans fats that come

from the frying process and vegetable oils such as palm oil. Excessive consumption of fat can increase the risk of obesity and heart disease (Hilma, SR, et al. 2022).

In addition to carbohydrates and fats, some instant foods such as chicken nuggets, sausages, and instant meatballs also contain protein. However, the quality of protein in instant foods is often not as good as natural protein from fresh meat due to the addition of preservatives and fillers that reduce its nutritional value. The salt (sodium) content in instant foods is also quite high, especially in instant noodles, fast foods, and snacks. Excessive sodium intake can cause high blood pressure and other health problems if consumed too often. Instant foods also often contain added sugar, especially in products such as packaged sweet drinks and snacks. Excessive sugar consumption can cause obesity, type 2 diabetes, and dental health problems in children (Yolanda, L. 2020). In addition, in order to last longer, instant foods contain preservatives, dyes, and artificial flavors, which if consumed continuously in large quantities can have a negative impact on health, such as increasing the risk of allergies or metabolic disorders. Although some instant food products have been fortified with vitamins and minerals, their nutritional content is often unbalanced compared to fresh foods. Instant foods also tend to be low in fiber, iron, calcium, and vitamins which are important for children's growth (Lusiandari, NE 2019).

Thus, although instant food provides convenience in serving, its consumption needs to be controlled so as not to have a negative impact on health. The high content of salt, sugar, and fat in instant food can increase the risk of various diseases if consumed excessively. Therefore, it is important for parents and the community to get used to a healthier diet by increasing the consumption of fresh foods that are rich in fiber, quality protein, and vitamins and minerals that the body needs.

Physical Health Risks in Children

Excessive consumption of instant foods can cause various physical health risks in children. One of the main problems is obesity, which occurs due to the high content of fat, sugar, and calories in instant foods. Children who often consume instant foods without being balanced with sufficient physical activity are at risk of being overweight, which can have long-term health impacts such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease. In addition, instant foods often contain high amounts of salt (sodium), which can increase blood pressure at an early age. If consumed excessively, the risk of hypertension and impaired kidney function can increase over time. High sodium content can also cause fluid retention, which makes the body prone to swelling or dehydration (Andriani, N., et al. 2024).

Another health problem that can arise from consuming instant foods is digestive disorders. Many instant foods are low in fiber, which can cause constipation and other digestive disorders. Lack of fiber intake in children's diets can also inhibit the body's metabolic processes and increase the risk of intestinal disorders. In addition to a lack of fiber, instant foods are also often low in iron, calcium, and other important vitamins. This can cause anemia in children due to iron deficiency, as well as impaired bone and tooth growth due to lack of calcium and vitamin D intake (Sembiring, TB et al. 2024). As a result, children who consume instant foods too often are at risk of experiencing growth retardation and weak immune systems, making them more susceptible to infection and disease. Not only that, some additives in instant foods such as preservatives, colorings,

and artificial flavors can also have a negative impact on health if consumed in large quantities. Several studies have shown that these substances can increase the risk of allergies, hormonal disorders, and even impaired brain development if consumed continuously in the long term (Ramdhana, D. 2023).

With these physical health risks, it is important for parents to monitor their children's diets so that they do not become too dependent on instant foods. Teaching healthy eating habits from an early age, such as consuming more fresh foods, vegetables, fruits, and quality proteins, can help children grow up healthy and reduce the risk of disease later in life.

The Importance of Parents' Role in Regulating Children's Eating Patterns

The role of parents is very important in regulating children's diet so that they grow up healthy and get enough nutrition. Children tend to like instant foods and snacks that are high in sugar, salt, and fat, because they taste good and are practical to serve. However, if consumed excessively, these foods can have negative impacts on health, such as obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, and digestive disorders. Therefore, parents need to play an active role in controlling children's food intake so that it remains balanced and nutritious. One of the main steps that parents can take is to provide an example of a healthy diet. Children often imitate their parents' habits, so if they see their parents consuming nutritious foods such as vegetables, fruits, and healthy proteins, they will be more likely to follow the same diet (Bahri, SY 2024). In addition, parents should also limit the consumption of instant foods at home and replace them with healthier foods, such as fruit-based snacks or more natural home-cooked foods. However, there are several steps that can be taken to reduce the negative impacts of instant foods. One of them is by increasing parental awareness of the importance of a healthy and balanced diet. By replacing instant foods with fresh and nutritious foods, children can get maximum benefits from every nutritional intake they consume.

In addition to setting a good example, parents also need to get their children used to recognizing healthy foods. This can be done by inviting them to cook together, explaining the benefits of each type of food, and involving them in choosing ingredients when shopping. In this way, children will be more aware of the importance of eating healthy and more interested in trying various nutritious foods. It is also important for parents to limit the consumption of instant foods and unhealthy snacks, especially those that contain lots of sugar, salt, and preservatives. One effective way is to create a regular meal schedule and ensure that children get nutritious main meals before consuming snacks. That way, children will not feel hungry and tempted to eat instant foods excessively (Jatmikowati, TE, et al. 2023).

In addition to regulating eating patterns at home, parents also need to pay attention to the food consumed by children while at school or outside the home. Bringing healthy food can be a solution so that children do not buy unhealthy snacks too often. Food made at home can be guaranteed to be cleaner and more nutritious, and can be adjusted to children's tastes so that they still enjoy it. By implementing a healthy diet from an early age, children can grow better, have strong immune systems, and avoid various diseases caused by poor diet. Therefore, the role of parents in regulating children's diet not only has an impact on their current physical health, but also on their eating habits in the future (Firdaus, D., et al. 2025).

Recommendations for Reducing the Negative Impact of Instant Food

To reduce the negative impacts of instant food, there are several recommendations that can be applied, especially for children who often consume these foods. One of the main ways is to limit the frequency of instant food consumption and replace it with healthier and more nutritious foods. For example, if a child is used to eating instant noodles, parents can reduce consumption to once a week and replace it with vegetable-based foods, protein, and complex carbohydrates such as brown rice or sweet potatoes. In addition to limiting the frequency of consumption, choosing instant foods with better nutritional content is also a solution. When buying instant food, you should check the nutritional content label and choose products that are lower in salt, sugar, and trans fat. There are several instant food products that have been fortified with vitamins and minerals, so they can be a better choice compared to products that only contain additives and artificial sweeteners (Tadung, IJ 2024).

Another way to reduce the negative impact of instant food is to process it in a healthier way. If children consume instant noodles, for example, it is better to reduce the use of instant seasonings that contain a lot of salt and MSG, then add vegetables, eggs, or fresh meat to increase the nutritional value. For foods such as nuggets or sausages, cooking them by baking or steaming is more advisable than frying them with excessive oil. In addition, getting children used to consuming more natural and nutritious foods is very important. Parents can introduce healthy snacks such as fruits, nuts, yogurt, or homemade smoothies as alternative snacks compared to packaged snacks that are high in sugar and salt. By providing healthy food choices at home, children will be more accustomed to consuming nutritious foods and reduce their dependence on instant foods.

It is also important to educate children about the impact of instant food on health. By providing a simple understanding of how instant food can affect the body, children will be more aware of choosing healthier foods. Parents and schools can also play a role in creating an environment that supports healthy eating patterns, such as by providing nutritious food in school canteens and limiting the sale of unhealthy snacks (Saras, T. 2023). By implementing these steps, instant food consumption can be controlled without having to drastically prohibit it. Children can still enjoy instant food occasionally, but in a healthier and more balanced way, so that the long-term health risks of poor diet can be minimized. In addition, instant food often contains very high levels of salt. Foods with high salt content can affect blood pressure and increase the risk of hypertension in children. According to several studies, children who often eat instant food have higher blood pressure compared to children who consume fresh and natural foods.

In addition, instant foods also contain a number of preservatives and dyes that can disrupt the body's balance. These chemicals can affect the function of children's organs, such as the kidneys and liver, in the long term. In some cases, children who often consume instant foods show signs of digestive system disorders, such as diarrhea or constipation. Other studies show that instant foods are low in vitamins and minerals that are important for children's growth and development. This malnutrition can affect children's immune systems, making them more susceptible to infection and disease (Alfiyati, NN 2020). In addition, low nutritional content can affect children's physical and cognitive development. Based on the results of the study, children who consume large amounts of instant foods also tend to develop metabolic disorders, such as type 2

diabetes. Consumption of foods that are high in sugar and fat can increase insulin resistance, which is a major risk factor for the disease. Children who are accustomed to sweet and fatty foods tend to develop bad eating habits (Tadung, IJ 2024).

Changes in eating habits in children are also related to parental eating patterns. Children who grow up in an environment that often consumes instant foods are more likely to adopt similar eating patterns. Therefore, parental intervention is very important to reduce these habits. Providing healthy food from an early age can help shape better eating patterns in the future. Not only does it have an impact on the physical, the habit of eating instant foods can also affect the psychological aspects of children. Several studies have shown that poor eating patterns can affect children's mood and behavior. Lack of essential nutrients can make children more susceptible to stress, anxiety, or other mood disorders (Saras, T. 2023)

In addition, routine provision of instant food can affect children's social relationships. Instant food is often eaten in a hurry and without attention to the quality of the food, which has the potential to reduce family time. This limited social interaction can affect children's emotional development. Providing instant food also affects children's sleep quality. Foods high in sugar and caffeine can disrupt children's sleep patterns, resulting in impaired growth and mental health. Several studies have linked poor sleep quality to decreased cognitive abilities and impaired concentration in children.

CONCLUSION

Giving instant food to children can have a negative impact on their physical and mental health. Instant food that contains high levels of salt, sugar, fat, and preservatives can affect the body's metabolism and is at risk of causing long-term health problems, such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and cognitive development disorders. Therefore, it is important for parents to be more selective in choosing the food given to their children. Reducing the consumption of instant food and replacing it with more nutritious food is very important to support optimal child growth and development. By increasing awareness of the dangers of giving instant food, it is hoped that parents can pay more attention to the quality of food consumed by children, as well as provide a healthier and more nutritious diet for their future.

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