

My name is Barb Frankowski, and I've practiced as a primary care pediatrician in Burlington, Vermont for almost 33 years. I'm sorry I can't meet with you in person today, but I feel passionate about healthy nutrition for children of all ages, so this is what I'd like you to know.

Here is the scene I see playing out every day in my office:

- 3, 4, or 5 year old child who just received shot(s): "WWHHAAAAAAA"
- Mother: "Oh, Jordan/Jessica, you did such a good job with your check up and shots! Let's go have lunch at _____ (insert name of fast food or local restaurant).
- Me: "NOOOOOOOOOO!"

Wouldn't it be wonderful if I could support that quality mother/child time if I knew the meal would be nutritious and healthy? Wouldn't it be easy if I could suggest a particular local restaurant that offered healthy meals?

Childhood obesity is not going away – not in the US and not in VT, where nearly a third of VT's youth are overweight or obese. As a pediatrician, I know what to suggest to parents and children: drink only low fat milk or water. Eat 5 servings of fruit and vegetables a day. Eat appropriate portions. But for otherwise healthy pre-school and school-aged kids that I only see once a year, my advice is not enough. Parents see what is advertised as "kids meals" in fast-food and other restaurants, and they trust that it is good (or at least OK) for their children. When I suggest otherwise, parents look at me as if I had 2 heads! "But," they think "it is labeled as a kids meal, so it must be the right thing to order for them!" NOOOOOOOOOO!

The other point to make is that healthy kids meals are NOT just designed for overweight kids – they could improve the eating habits and health of ALL children! Wouldn't it be great if coaches or parents taking the soccer team out for a treat after the game had a healthy choice? We know that poor nutrition (along with lack of exercise and tobacco use) is one of the 3 behaviors that are the driving 4 chronic diseases in VT, costing the state over \$2 million!

Some argue that kids won't "like" or eat the healthier options. Not true! In Burlington schools (and other schools across the state), participation in Farm to School programs have brought healthier foods to traditional school lunches, and kids actually enjoy trying the different healthier options! When it is there at school, and they are eating with their friends, it is not a problem. I have seen it with my own eyes! And even more so at a restaurant, which is associated with a special occasion, a treat, or special time with family – kids are excited to eat healthy things presented in a pleasing way. Even better if there are several healthy meals to choose from!

We know from research in Vermont that restaurants can provide healthier meals for minimal extra cost, and parents would be willing to pay a bit more for these healthier meals. Parents love their children and really want to do the right thing. Even better if we make the "right thing" the natural option.

So, for the sake of our children, the future of Vermont, I strongly support S.70/H.264. It will help me as a pediatrician do my job better, and help all parents do their job better! Let's be able to say YESSSSSSS to healthy kids meals in restaurants!