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ABC News

“Food in America”

Preservatives contribute to america’s unhealthiness

By Shawntelle Moncy

           It’s generally accepted that the United States doesn’t have the best eating habits of the world. But it’s not just the unhealthy eating habits of Americans. It has to do with the food itself.

           Food tastes different in every country, but the extent the U.S. has taken to preserve its product to last to its full capability has caused food to be extremely unhealthy.

           “America has lost the meaning of fresh meat and vegetables,” said Dr. Georgia Bazemore, a professor at EWU involved in global studies in Greece.

           Maybe it’s the population of America, because organic crops are expensive, or maybe it’s because of how much hard labor it takes to grow organic crops, but either way, chemicals seem to have become just another ingredient in America’s food.

           In fact, some chemicals used in foods in the United States have been banned in other countries because of how unhealthy they are. In Singapore, according to “Revealed: Shocking list of popular foods and drinks readily available in U.S. grocery stores that are BANNED in other countries because their chemicals are deemed dangerous'', you can be sentenced to 15 years in prison and charged a $500,000 fine for using a chemical in food products that’s commonly found in in frozen dinners in America. This chemical is called azodicarbomide, also used in things like bleach and rubber yoga mats.

           Not only that, but according to the same article above, Mountain Dew and products used to keep carpets from catching on fire are made from the same chemical, which is brominated vegetable oil. Chemicals found in Chex Mix, butylated hydroxyanisole and butylated hydroxytoluene, both are waxy solids made from petroleum and known to cause cancer in rats.

Many food colorings are also banned from various countries. For example, according to the ABC News article “Eleven Food Ingredients Banned Outside The U.S. That We Eat,” “yellow No. 5 is banned in Norway and Austria due to the compounds of benzidine and 4-aminobiphenyl. ‘Six of the 11 studies on yellow No. 5 showed that it caused genotoxicity, a deterioration of the cell’s genetic material with potential to mutate healthy DNA’ the book, ‘Rich Foods, Poor Foods,’ states.”

           These sorts of ingredients are listed at the bottom of every ingredients list, maybe in the hope that it will go unnoticed because it is written too small to actually read with no explanation of what the ingredient actually is. Ingredients that the average human being cannot even pronounce can’t be good for anybody.

           These are all just simple, everyday foods in America. Many Americans eat these foods regularly, but it’s about time American’s look into nutrition instead of prescribed drugs for a solution for illnesses.

           It doesn’t take much to notice that there are chemicals in the foods in the U.S., Americans are just so used to it, that it goes by unnoticed often. However, many visitors to the U.S. may notice food that is produced here tastes different from food from their home country. “You can even tell that the fruit has been modified because I’m so used the organic fruits,” Addisu Weldegiorgis, a EWU international student from Ethiopia, said.

           So is it just the chemicals in America’s food? Or is it the proportions of which we eat our food? Well according to Bazemore, she watched a student lose several pant sizes while being in Cyprus, Greece for the summer. Yet he had not eaten any less than he had in the United States. If anything, he ate more.

    “I had a large student come to Cyprus with me and he brought the smallest pants that he had,” Bazemore said. “And by the end of the summer, those pants were falling off of him. And there was no diet involved.”

           “Everything there is fresh and organic,” Bazemore said. “You don’t eat meat if it’s more than six hours old.”

           With the population that the United States has, only eating meat less than six hours old seems impossible. But with the technology we have developed, I would think we can find a better way to preserve foods other than chemicals. I believe we could live without them and possibly extend our average life span. Sure, it may not be easy, but there is no question about the importance of healthy food sources.

           The sooner we Americans realize which chemicals that we are actually putting into our bodies and choose to eat healthier, the sooner illnesses will occur less because of poor eating habits.