



What's Making Our Children Sick?

How Industrial Food Is Causing an Epidemic of Chronic Illness, and What Parents (and Doctors) Can Do About It

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A radical rethinking of the relationships between our children's food, medicine, and health in the twenty-first century

The Problem

According to 2013 data from the Center for Child and Adolescent Health Policy, over half of US children and teens live with a chronic condition.* Michelle Perro, MD, a veteran pediatrician with over thirty-five years experience successfully treating children, and Vincanne Adams, PhD, believe the following factors have contributed to this epidemic:

- Chronic exposure of children to poisons in their environment, especially from foods produced by our modern industrial food system
- Outdated models of clinical care and disease causation
- A scientific community that is embattled when it comes to food-health science.

This is a terrain that results in poor health, frustrated patients and families, and conflicted medical professionals—and it all centers around what we eat and what we feed our kids.

The Solution

What's Making Our Children Sick? presents a roadmap to help parents, practitioners, and health educators navigate the current landscape—from new knowledge about the microbiology of gut health, to a review of scientific studies on the effects of glyphosate and other pesticides, to the clinical experiences of doctors who are trying to treat children with chronic hard-to-diagnose health problems.

Woven throughout the narrative are case studies of patients that demonstrate the effectiveness of a food-focused approach to medicine, specifically organic foods. They also showcase the various diagnostic tests and treatment methods that are available in an integrative doctor's toolkit when the goal is to find the root cause of a problem, rather than prioritizing drugs to alleviate the symptoms.

The book serves as a resource for others who are trying to connect the dots between agroindustrial food and poor health, and offers a template for larger social and political change on issues of food health, children's well-being, and the future of medicine.

* E. J. Mundell and HealthDay Reporter, "Rise in Child Chronic Illness Could Swamp Health Care," *HealthDay ABC News*, posted May 23, 2016



Michelle Perro, MD, is a pediatrician with over thirty-five years of experience in acute and integrative medicine. Positions she has held include director of the Pediatric Emergency Department at New York's Metropolitan Hospital and Attending Physician at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland, among others, and she has managed her own practice.



Vincanne Adams, PhD, is a professor and vice-chair of medical anthropology at the University of California, San Francisco. She has previously published six books and is editor-in-chief of *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*.

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What's Making Our Children SICK?

Chronic disorders among American children have reached epidemic levels.
Here's what the landscape looks like today:

- One in thirteen children have a serious food allergy, a rate that has increased by 50 percent since 1997.
- Nearly nine percent of children have asthma, with dramatic increases in rates from 1980 to today.
- The prevalence of childhood eczema/atopic dermatitis in the United States is 10.7 percent overall and as high as 18.1 percent in individual states, a rate that nearly doubled in the past several decades.
- One in ten of the more than 1.6 million Americans with Crohn's disease or colitis are children.
- One in roughly 140 Americans has celiac disease—a rate that has increased 4.5 times over the past 50 years, with rates increasing among children in particular.
- Gastrointestinal reflux affects eight percent of children, and today ten percent of infants younger than twelve months with reflux now develop significant complications resulting in a disorder called gastroesophageal reflux disease or GERD.
- Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) occurs in six to 24 percent of kids from middle school through high school.
- Type 2 diabetes accounted for less than three percent of all cases of new-onset adolescent diabetes up until ten years ago, and now it accounts for 45 percent of these cases.
- One in five American children is obese.
- One in 41 boys and one in 68 children have a diagnosis of autism spectrum and eleven percent of children have a diagnosis of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
- Just over 20 percent (or one in five) of children either currently or at some point during their life will have a seriously debilitating mental disorder.
- Nearly 60 percent of children experience chronic headaches, with seven percent of these being chronic migraines.

Note: All statistics are referenced in full in the index section of the book.