

HEALTH

Skip chips and chocolate, munch apples

■ Dad forming group of parents concerned about kids' health.

By Petra Kossman
TIMES REPORTER

Kevin Burtneck is on a crusade against junk food.

And he's looking for other parents who feel the same way about their children's nutrition.

Burtneck, 28, says he and his wife, Rosalie, are tired of being looked at as freaks because their kids aren't allowed to drink pop or eat donuts.

So he is trying to develop a network of people with common nutritional goals.

Burtneck says there is tremendous pressure, from both advertising in the media and well-meaning friends and relatives, who try to tempt their children with junk food.

"We've had lots of conflicts with in-laws, and outlaws, as I call them," he chuckles.

But he is deadly serious about the issue itself.

"We have to start taking personal responsibility for our bodies and our health. And it has to start with the kids.

"It's extremely, extremely

important what they put in their bodies." His children, Kerris, 6, and Kyle, 3, are not allowed sweets, chips, candy bars — and definitely no pop.

"They drink lots of water, tons of water, and natural juice — I have a juicer.

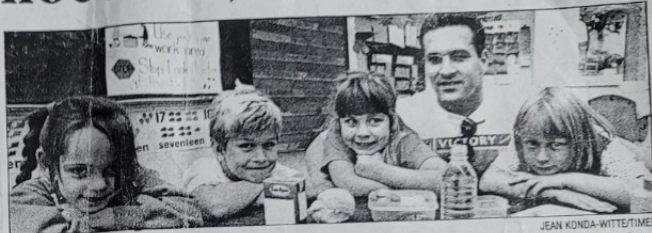
"It's really frustrating to me how much money those pop companies make," Burtneck says, "because there is nothing in it of any value to anyone."

If his children want something to snack on in the afternoon, they might get popcorn, rice cakes, fruit, or a tuna-fish sandwich if they're really hungry, he said.

Burtneck, a forklift driver at a paper mill, says the guys he works with used to tease him about his lunches all the time, which often contain oatmeal, fruit, lots of pasta or tuna. "Now, they're used to it."

He put up posters mentioning his formation of a network or group and had several calls already. "It makes me feel good, 'cause I know I'm not the only one out there."

He has invited a naturopath to speak at the group's first meeting and is scheduling the author of a children's cookbook next.



JEAN KONDA-WITTE/TIMES

Nyree Bouker, Jesse Warawa, Kerris Burtneck, Jennifer Zoetelief skip the junk food and munch on healthy fare. Kevin Burtneck is a parent who's concerned about preventive health care.

"I think as parents, we need to really look out for our kids. It takes a lot of effort, but that's our job. "We can't just take the easy way out and give in, 'cause everyone else is doing it."

It's not just children's health and nutrition he's worried about, but he says that is the best place to start.

"I honestly and truly believe that our diets are linked to all these diseases, like cancer, high blood pressure, heart disease.

"I think we're maybe too dependent on scientists for a cure — when we can prevent it ourselves." Anyone interested can call Kevin at 855-6075.



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