

over the food those districts offer.

In L.A., where about 80 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-cost lunch, “we get asked about having organic foods,” Singh said. “Well, the USDA doesn’t reimburse us for that. When that policy changes, we will be happy to go to organic foods.”

Districts have to balance the books, so offering foods that cost less to buy and have higher profit margins—say, Pop-Tarts or quickly reheated chicken nuggets—will always be tempting.

These highly processed, low-nutrition items, Villarreal said, are often produced by food industry giants that can leverage their tremendous market clout and government subsidies to lower costs.

So how do schools effect real change in menus on a no-frills budget?

The answers, somewhat surprisingly, may lie close to home.

In cash-strapped Oakland, administrators formed a farm-to-school cooperative, bringing in fresh produce from local growers. It was part of a complete overhaul intended to put more plant-based items on their lunchroom menus.

They cut back on mass meat purchases, instead buying smaller quantities of higher-quality meat and pairing it with more legumes. They installed a central kitchen

**About this story:**

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in the district to expedite cooking from scratch, enabling them to deliver freshly prepared entrees to their campuses.

Friends of the Earth, a Berkeley-based environmental advocacy group, analyzed the Oakland district’s procurement over a two-year period and found that the district saved nearly \$42,000, or about 1 percent of its annual food budget, according to Kari Hamerschlag, the group’s deputy director for food and agriculture.

And student satisfaction with the menu grew.

Such efforts could get a boost from state lawmakers in Sacramento: The Assembly this year passed a bill to help pay for more plant-based meals and types of milk in schools. It now requires action in the Senate.

But taste still rules. In Singh’s Los Angeles district, all prospective dishes must run a three-step qualifying gantlet, which ends with a taste test by students. Anything lower than 80 percent approval means the dish is scrapped.

“That’s a B average,” Singh said. “Why would we serve anything below that?” □

## WEEKLY DOSE



### Up and at 'em

To eat or not to eat, that is the question. Some say eating before exercising in the morning gives you necessary fuel for a long workout. Others say that you burn more fat if you exercise before eating. A small study just released out of the UK agrees with the latter. Thirty over-

weight men who exercised before breakfast burned twice the fat as men who ate breakfast before they worked out. This is because exercising with no fuel forces the body to burn stored carbs, and when those are gone, the body burns fat cells. Skipping breakfast before exercise also made the men’s muscles more responsive to insulin, reducing the risk for diabetes and heart disease. This new data doesn’t end the debate, but the results are intriguing. Experts do suggest to eat within 15 to 30 minutes of exercising, and don’t forget to drink your water.

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### Latest Diagnostic Testing Methods for Lyme Disease and Co-Infections

PRESENTED BY:



**Dr. Jyotsna Shag** - President/Lab Director of  
IGeneX Labs - Milpitas, CA



**Markus Berger** - Armin Labs, Germany

AFTERNOON SESSION: 12:30-2:00PM

EVENING SESSION: 6:00-8:00PM

### The Psychological Impacts of Lyme

PRESENTED BY:

**Kathleen Steele, LCSW** - Kathleen has focused her practice on counseling Lyme patients and has first hand experience of the difficulties those suffering from Lyme and their families experience day to day.

KATHLEEN WILL BE PRESENTING THE EVENING SESSION ONLY

Chico LYME Support Group meets the 3rd Monday of the month 5:30-7:00 pm

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