

## Medical History

Being sick is no fun. It's even worse when you have to take bad tasting medicine. Yuck.

But what if you could eat French fries with ketchup instead? Or drink Coke? It might surprise you to know that both of these foods were originally medicines.

In the 1830s, ketchup was sold as a medicine. It was supposed to help with stomachaches. Eventually people figured out that ketchup didn't make them feel better. But they still liked to put it on their hamburgers and fries!

John Pemberton invented Coca-Cola in 1886. He sold it as his drug store as a cure for headaches. People thought that the bubbles would keep them healthy.

Other common foods used to be medicines, too. Corn Flakes and Fig Newtons helped digestion. Dr. Pepper soda was supposedly a brain tonic. And Seven-Up was said to improve your mood.

Most of these claims were found to be untrue. In fact, many of these foods are now considered unhealthy. A few of them did have ingredients that could be helpful. But most of those ingredients were eventually taken out of the foods. They were sold as regulated medicines instead.



Food science has its own history. Today we know much more about the chemicals that make up our food than we did in the 1800s. Scientists and doctors can recommend certain foods that help to keep us healthy. Most doctors tell us to eat fruits and vegetables because they have vitamins and fiber.

Advertising also has a history. People are no longer allowed to say that a food can cure you without research to back it up. These new rules are much better for consumers who buy the foods. But it sure would be a lot more fun to drink soda than take Aspirin!



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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Ketchup was supposed to help with \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Headaches
  - b. Stomachaches
  - c. Digestion
  - d. Brain function
  
2. Which food was supposed to improve your mood?
  - a. Coca-Cola
  - b. Corn Flakes
  - c. Seven-Up
  - d. Fig Newtons
  
3. Why do doctors recommend eating fruits and vegetables?
  - a. They have vitamins
  - b. They have fiber
  - c. They cure diseases
  - d. A and B
  
4. Why are the new advertising rules better for consumers?
  - a. Because people won't waste money on products that don't work
  - b. Because people will eat French fries and ketchup when they are sick
  - c. Because people know more about food science now
  - d. Because people will think that Coke helps with headaches

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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