

from **Why Can't I Live on**
French Fries?



Essay by **Richard J. Roberts**

So what's so bad about stuffing yourself with nothing but French fries all the time, anyway? Simple: Pretty soon you'll be missing important nutrients.

Let's start with vitamins. The body does not need much of them, but in most cases, it cannot produce them. Potatoes contain mostly vitamin C and hardly
5 any other vitamin. No vitamin K, for example, which is needed to form a scab when you're bleeding so that the bleeding stops. And no vitamin A, needed for the eyes to function properly. Not enough vitamin A, and you'll see even less well at night than everyone else. Over the long run, a lack of vitamin A can even cause blindness. Many children in Africa suffer from it.

10 If you were to eat only French fries, your teeth would also slowly go bad and your bones would become brittle. That's because potatoes do not contain enough calcium, and your bones need calcium throughout your life, not just while you're growing. Besides, all those mountains of fries would overload you with sodium, because they're often too salty, and salt contains sodium.
15 It's important that your body maintain a good sodium balance, because otherwise, it can't regulate its body temperature very well, but too much sodium causes high blood pressure in some people.

French fries also contain little protein. Proteins are critical. They are the true bearers of life. The cells from which most living creatures are built consist
20 mostly of proteins. Without proteins, for example, you would not have any muscles. . . .

We chemists and doctors still know far too little about nutrition and its effects on health. This is why every person has to find out for him- or herself what's good for each. But one thing I can guarantee: You'll get into trouble
25 if you always eat nothing but French fries. By the way, I myself would love to wolf down French fries every day. But I, too, have to restrain myself and should stick to the advice that I've given you here.