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Parents risk jail for raising children as vegans – 19th May, 2019

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Belgian doctors said giving children a vegan diet is "unethical" and criminal. Vegans do not eat animal products, including eggs and dairy. Belgium's medical association said veganism was "unsuitable for unborn children, children, teenagers, and pregnant...women". It said vegan parenting does not help "a person in danger". This is a criminal offense with a possible two-year prison sentence. It said children needed protein from meat.

An animal rights group called the ruling "ignorant codswallop". It said: "A meat- and dairy-based diet is what strikes people down in adulthood, as it can lead to hardened arteries that cause stroke...and heart attacks." A spokeswoman said: "A well-planned vegan diet is perfect for babies and children." Her children "thrived" on a vegan diet. She added: "It's the parents' responsibility to ensure their child is getting all the necessary nutrients."

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Doctors in Belgium have said giving children a vegan diet is "unethical" and should be a crime. Vegans do not eat any animal products, including eggs, dairy products and other animal-derived food. Belgium's medical association declared that veganism is "unsuitable for unborn children, children, teenagers, and pregnant...women". It said vegan parenting is "non-assistance to a person in danger," which is a criminal offense that carries a prison sentence of up to two years. It said children need the protein and essential fatty acids from animal products.

The animal rights group PETA rejected the ruling and called it "ignorant codswallop". A PETA spokeswoman said: "A meat- and dairy-based diet is what strikes people down in adulthood, as it can lead to hardened arteries that cause stroke, brain aneurysms, and heart attacks. She added: "A well-planned vegan diet is perfect for babies and children." She said her children "thrive on a balanced vegan diet". She added: "It's the parents' responsibility to ensure their child is getting all the necessary nutrients." Around three per cent of Belgian children live in vegan families.

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Doctors in Belgium have stated that raising children on a vegan diet is "unethical" and should be a criminal offence. Vegans refrain from consuming any animal products, including meat, eggs, dairy products and other animal-derived substances. The Royal Academy of Medicine of Belgium has declared that veganism is "unsuitable for unborn children, children, teenagers, and pregnant and lactating women". Professor Georges Casimir said vegan parenting qualifies as "non-assistance to a person in danger," which is a criminal offense that carries a prison sentence of up to two years. He said children need "higher requirements for protein and essential fatty acids" and that these nutrients must be from animal products.

The animal rights group PETA reacted angrily to the ruling of the Belgian medical association. It rejected the ruling and called it "ignorant codswallop". PETA spokeswoman Dawn Carr said: "Nutritionists confirm that while a meat- and dairy-based diet is what strikes people down in adulthood (as it can lead to hardened arteries that cause stroke, brain aneurysms, and heart attacks) a well-planned vegan diet is perfect for babies and children." She added: "Kids, including my own, thrive on a balanced vegan diet, but as with any dietary regime, it's the parents' responsibility to ensure their child is getting all the necessary nutrients." Around three per cent of Belgian children live in vegan families.