'Fast food slows down children's brains'

Eating Junk Linked To Poor Scores In School Tests, Says Study On American Kids

London: Parents, please note! Fast food may slow the brain and make children perform worse in school, a new study has warned.

In the study of more than 8,000 participant children who ate the most fast food were found to have poorer scores in tests for maths, science and reading.

"Research has been focused on how children's food consumption contributes to the child obesity epidemic. Our findings provide evidence that eating fast food is linked to another problem: poorer academic outcomes," said Dr Kelly Purtell who led the study at Ohio State University.

The research used data from a national representative Amer-

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NOT A HAPPY MEAL

ican sample of 8,500 schoolchildren, whose fast food consumption was measured at the age of 10, and then compared against academic test results three years later.

Children were asked how many times they had eaten a meal or snack from a fast-food restaurant, 'The Telegraph' reported. Fifty two per cent had eaten fast food between one and three times in the previous week and 10% had eaten it four to six times.

In science tests, the daily eaters scored an average of 79 points, compared to 83 in those who never ate fast food. Similar differences in academic achievement were observed for reading and maths.

Researchers said it is possi-

ble that a lack of iron — which is associated with fast food — leads to a slowing in development of certain processes in the brain. The consequences of a poor diet may have been laid bare by a new study published in Clinical Pediatrics (paywall), which suggests that children who eat regularly at McDonald's, KFC, Pizza Hut, and the like don't perform as well at school as their peers.

Fast food, of course, is popular partly because it is very cheap, and families who feed it to their children regularly are poorer—which means they're also less able to provide other things that help a child learn, such as books, a quiet study space, and parental help. PTI