

The Fast Food Craze

Wreaking Havoc on Our Bodies and Our Animals

Tina Volpe



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For Mom

*To the animals I hear and see in my dreams,
I love each and every one of you,
and I am trying to get your voice heard!*

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The fast food craze

*"In 1970, Americans spent about \$6 billion on fast food; in 2000, they spent more than \$110 billion. Americans now spend more money on fast food than on higher education, personal computers, computer software, or new cars. They spend more on fast food than on movies, books, magazines, newspapers, videos, and recorded music-combined." -Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation**

Total fast-food sales for 2003, \$120.9 BILLION

In my youth, the fifties and sixties, I don't remember having many fast food restaurants available to me. McDonald's was around, but they were few and far between. For me, a peanut butter and jelly sandwich with an apple or a banana was a treat. (Which is probably why the cancer rates in those days were dramatically lower, and we didn't even know what obesity was.) What you are about to read may surprise, shock, and shake you to the core. It did me. I thought maybe, just maybe, I could help a little in this huge problem we have in America. Obesity, cancer, and last but certainly not least, animal cruelty.

The Fast Food Craze

What ARE we thinking?

Cancer rates have risen to the tune that one in four people are expected to contract some form of cancer in 2004. The statistics on nutrition-linked cancers is staggering. If Americans ate a healthy, balanced diet based mainly on vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and beans that help maintain a healthful weight, as many as one-third of all cancer deaths in the United States could be prevented. Numerous scientific studies have demonstrated that dietary habits affect cancers at many sites. Strong scientific evidence has proven that diets high in fruits and vegetables have protective effects against cancers of the gastrointestinal tracts (e.g. colon, rectum) and respiratory tract (e.g. lung, larynx).

Diets low in fruits and vegetables have also been linked with increased risk of oral, ovarian, and cervical cancers. There is also evidence linking high-fat diets with increased risk of colon, prostate, and endometrial cancer. In 2003, about 556,500 Americans were expected to contract some type of cancer, that is a staggering 1,500 people per day! Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the U.S., exceeded only by heart disease. I truly believe both are attributed to America's obsession with fast food and its convenience. The poisons and chemicals in these products are all so nicely concealed. McDonald's and other fast food chains like Burger King have actually tried to add some healthier food options, like the veggie burgers, salads, and fruit. These efforts coincide with the ongoing threat of public and legal pressure. I believe this fast food craze is on its way out, if not by public awareness, by the lawsuits demanding that corporations label their "foods" for what they are . . . poison to our bodies!

The Fast Food Craze

The first McDonald's was built in 1940 by the McDonald brothers (Dick and Mac). McDonald's churns out an incredible volume and range of sophisticated propaganda. The company carefully targets sections of the population (parents, the media, health professionals, etc.).

Like many successful corporations, every marketing piece is very carefully written, to persuade, to motivate, to sell—not necessarily to clearly convey the facts. The success of McDonald's is dependent on its carefully manufactured image.

Of course it is *possible* to eat responsibly at McDonald's, as spokesmen for the chain never tire of reminding us. Fast food is simply one element of a balanced nutritional plan. Of course it's the *unbalanced* element, unless you order the fish filet sandwich with no mayonnaise, and one of those little salads with the lo-cal dressing; then you'll be fine, except for the refined white flour in the bun and the high intake of sodium. Eating responsibly at McDonald's is a nearly impossible task.

In *Supersize Me*, a film by Morgan Spurlock, the producer decided to eat McDonald's food for thirty days, three times a day, and nothing else. This was brought on because of a television program Spurlock had watched about two teenagers from New York, who were suing McDonald's for making them obese. McDonald's responded by saying their food was nutritious and good for people. "Is that so?" Spurlock wondered . . . thus the McDonald's binge test was born. Taking a comic, yet serious look at America's addiction to fast food, Spurlock decided to