



HeartWorks Weekly Digest

Is All Fast Food Truly Unhealthy?

Here's A Hint: Absolutely!



by *Charlene Guo, Trisha Sakalkale, Nirali Shah, and Ella Tao* on May 08



*M*mmm. You take a bite from that mouthwatering cheeseburger. All the ingredients blend together perfectly. Your taste buds are overwhelmed by a heavenly taste. You swiftly take another bite. Five minutes later, the burger and fries are all gone and you feel drowsy. Another twenty minutes

and you are looking for a snack in the fridge. Be honest. There is no benefit or satisfaction.

This is a common routine for many. In fact, according to partnersforyourhealth.com, an organization dedicated to health research, Americans spend a total of \$200 billion on fast food per year. To put this number in context, that's higher than the annual revenue of Microsoft, a well-known, multi-billion dollar leading software company! We were intrigued by this data. Thus, we wanted to look into the fast food industry and figure out if all fast food is truly unhealthy.

To learn more about fast food, we interviewed a local nutritionist, Ellen Lovelace. Five years ago, Ellen created A Balanced Table, a platform that helps people make the right nutritional choices and live a balanced life. Many have said that she has helped change their lives.



While conducting our interview, we found that Ellen rarely eats at restaurants. In fact, she said, "I actually don't eat fast food at all." She believes that eating meals at home offer much better nutrition. She tells her clients to make cooking a hobby that the whole family can get involved in, and learn to enjoy.

“Everything that you eat has the ability to either bring you health or bring you harm.”

Ellen Lovelace

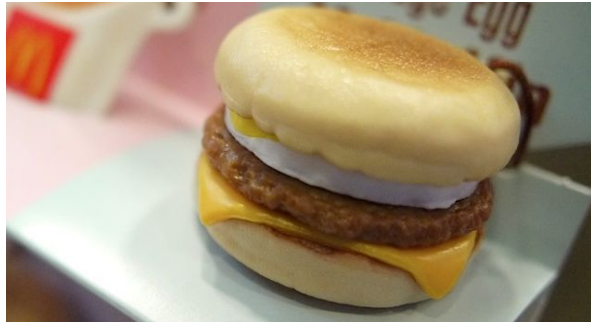
When we asked Ellen about her opinion if some fast foods, like salads, are healthier than others, she responded, “When it comes to the salad, you know, you're getting very poor-quality lettuce that was shipped from far away, that doesn't have a lot of nourishment in it. They're probably topping it with chicken, or some other source of protein that still is coming from very far away and very poor sources, in factory farming. You're getting a dressing, that usually in those dressings, there's a lot of additives, a lot of preservatives, a lot of sugar, and a lot of low-quality fats.”

Ellen also thinks that the reasons why people continue to eat fast food regularly even when many are aware of the results is because they believe that the effects will not happen to them. Regular customers don't believe that they will get type two diabetes, heart disease, strokes, or cancer, only a few common drawbacks of overeating fast food.

People may not know where their favorite fast food restaurants get their ingredients, let alone the quality. The McDonald's website says that the franchise gets its ingredients from great quality farms. One of [McDonald's](#) lettuce providers, Dirk Giannini, says, “To produce high-quality lettuce, the attention to detail is demanding, and we are here every day making sure we can make that



happen for McDonald's." Within a few days, the lettuce is harvested, triple-rinsed, and delivered to McDonald's. More than the ingredients, there is a lot more work that consumers do not realize.



Tracy V. Wilson, a writer for [HowStuffWorks](#), states that foods are mass produced, refrigerated, and then reheated for serving because it saves time. Wilson reveals that fast food chains add natural and artificial flavoring to make all their foods taste the same. According to a *HuffPost* article, David DiSalvo, a *Forbes* author, discovered that the [eggs of a breakfast egg sandwich](#) are a blend of glycerin, a solvent found in soap and

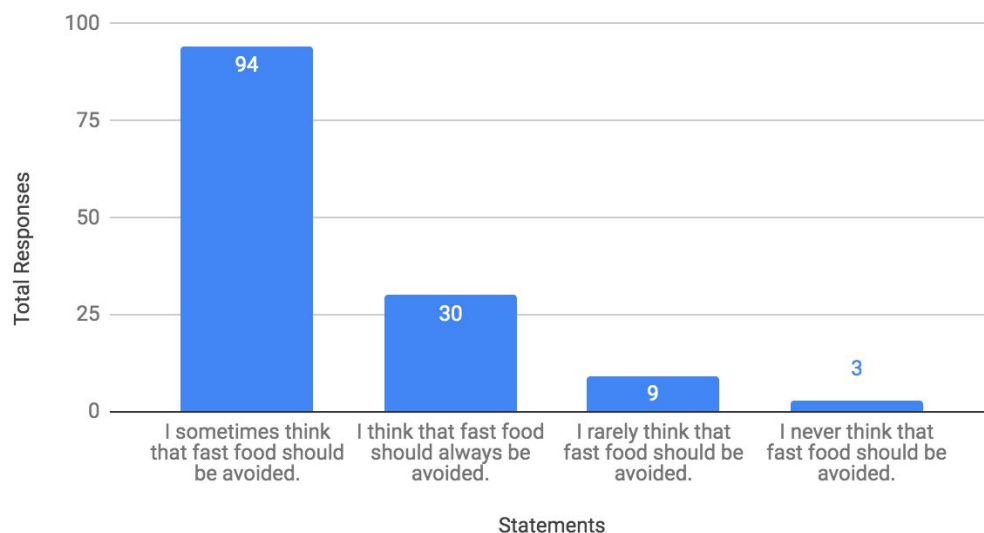
shaving cream, and dimethylpolysiloxane, a lubricating and conditioning agent. Consumers may not be aware of these ingredients and continue to eat them without knowing the consequences.

Our Final Venture: A Survey

To round out our exploration in the fast food industry, we surveyed over a hundred and thirty people with varying age ranges about their fast food habits and their personal opinion on fast food.

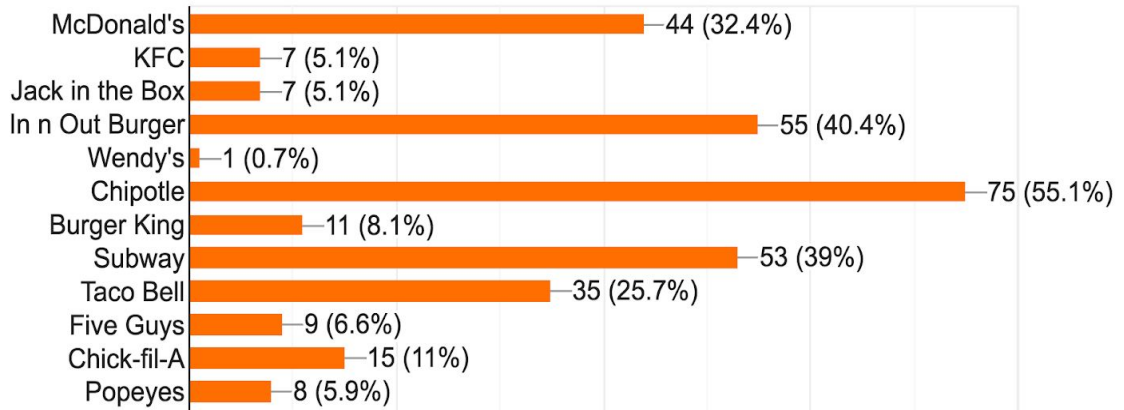
Here are some of the charts we collected from our survey:

Which Statement Best Applies To You?



What fast food options do you go to most often? Select up to three.

136 responses



Some of the responses have been cut off as the percentages are too small to display.

Tips for Eating Healthier

Although Ellen recommends eating at home most of the time, she does give some tips on how to eat healthier if you do eat fast food. She started off by saying that before anything, people should learn how to cook, but it does not have to be overly complicated. People can cook dinners and make extras so they can take them for lunch. She also said that instead of eating fast food, you can have a picnic at a park with some friends. Lastly, Ellen said to do your own research. She said it is important to understand what people put in their body because ultimately, you are what you eat. We also did our own research regarding how to make healthier fast food choices. In a quick summary, we learned that customers should be aware of [condiments, avoid liquid calories, and watch out for sides.](#)

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