



SESSION 4: WHAT'S IN MY BIG MAC?

Investigating fast food restaurants and portion distortion
Making lip-smacking lunches (instead of eating chicken nuggets)

KEY MESSAGES:

- Fast food should be a treat, not a regular part of our diet.
- Fast food restaurants spend billions of dollars trying to convince young people to eat unhealthy food.
- Fast food restaurants use portion distortion—the amount of food served is much more than you need in a meal.
- Fast food is high in calories, salt, and the harmful kind of fat.
- A small amount of the right kind of fat is good for our bodies, but too much of the wrong kinds of fat will lead to heart disease.
- One McDonald's meal has more fat than children should eat in an entire day!
- If you do go to a fast food restaurant, make smart choices—drink water, don't order a large size of anything, and try fresh fruit or veggies if available.

PREPARATION:

- Purchase ingredients for Hungry Hummus Wraps recipe. Also purchase a container of store-bought hummus so students can see what it looks like. Since students might not be able to make the hummus at home, they could ask a parent to buy it at the store.
- Print copies of the recipe for each student.
- Print copies of invitation for family members to come to final session for celebration meal (found on the Food Explorers website).

• Review these resources:

Robert Wood Johnson's Fast Food Facts 2013
www.rwjf.org/en/research-publications/find-rwjf-research/2013/11/fast-food-facts-2013.html?cid=XEM_A7723

Video on food marketing to children
foodmyths.org/myths/marketing-advertising/

Fat and Measuring
www.healthtrek.org/for-teens/7-fat-and-measuring

McDonald's nutritional info
nutrition.mcdonalds.com/getnutrition/nutritionfacts.pdf

Nutrition one-pagers from My Plate
www.choosemyplate.gov/healthy-eating-tips/ten-tips.html

Videos for students to watch if time allows:

- Jamie Oliver making chicken nugget
www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9B7im8aQjo
- The Decomposition of McDonalds' food
www.youtube.com/watch?v=8uHxRwQqWFo

EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

- Session #4 Bin:
- 3 sets of McDonald's meals—one for each group of students. Each set contains the packaging of 1 Big Mac, 1 large fries, 1 large chocolate shake
- Other fast food packaging, toys, and crowns
- Small Ziploc bags for fat measuring
- Portion Distortion Cards
- Tablespoons for fat measuring
- 3 small cans of Crisco for fat measuring
- Food processor
- Can opener
- Colanders
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Knives
- Cutting boards
- Juicer
- Grater
- Dressing bottle
- Serving bowls
- Serving spoons
- Rubber spatulas (for spreading hummus)
- Tongs
- Plates and napkins

SET UP:

Have one large table filled with fast food items for students to look at: happy meal boxes, toys, Burger King crowns, etc.

Set up 3 investigation stations on long tables. Each station should have:

- Big Mac package
- Large fries package
- Large chocolate shake cup
- Crisco can
- Small cup of vegetable oil
- Tablespoons
- Ziploc bags
- Paper towels

DISCUSSION



? *What are your favorite fast food restaurant?*

? *How often do you go?*

1 and 3 kids eat fast food EVERY day!
—Robert Wood Johnson's Fast Food Facts

? *Why do you go?*

? *What are some of your favorite menu items?*

? *Is there anything healthy on the menu? Any fresh food?*

? *Do you think it's good for you?*

Only 1% of kids meals at fast food restaurants met nutrition standards.

And most children don't eat kid's meals anyway—they consume larger portions with more calories, salt, and fat.

? *You know how fast food is so cheap?*

! Making food cheap usually ends up tasting like cardboard—no natural bright colors, no flavorful seasonings, etc. So in order to make the food taste good while keeping the cost extra low, fast food restaurants add extra sugar, salt, and fat. You may not even realize how many calories you are consuming!

Fast food companies spend a lot of money advertising to kids.

A total of \$4.6 billion was spent on all advertising by fast food restaurants in 2012.

McDonald's alone spent 2.7 times as much money to advertise its products as ALL fruit, vegetable, bottled water, and milk advertisers combined.

—Robert Wood Johnson's Fast Food Facts 2013

? *How do fast food companies target young people?*

- Television, especially children's networks
On average, a teenager sees 5 TV commercials for fast food a day.
- Websites and video games
Fast food restaurants have their own websites and they advertise heavily on websites frequented by teenagers
- Facebook
Six billion fast food ads appeared on Facebook
- Smart phones
Fast food companies use GPS technology to track when young people are close by their restaurants, and send them coupons to encourage eating.

- Sports stadiums

- Schools

Fast food companies give away free coupons at schools; give rewards to students for academic accomplishments.

Top Fast Food Advertisers:

- McDonald's Happy Meals
- Domino's pizza
- Subway sandwiches
- Wendy's lunch/dinner items
- Pizza Hut pizza.

? *What's wrong with eating fast food all of the time?*

It's ok to have it occasionally as a treat, but try not to eat it every day.

- Fast food has is extremely high in calories, salt, and fat.
- Fast food will make you feel tired and sluggish.
- Fast food portions are too large.
Explain the concept of **PORTION DISTORTION**—the amount of food served is much more than you need in a meal.

Look at different sizes of fries from McDonald's:

- A children's fries has 101 calories
- A small fry has 231 calories
- A medium fry has 380 calories
- A large fry has 500 calories

! Look at the Portion Distortion Cards to see how portions, calories, and fat content have increase over time.

If time allows, look at the correct portion sizes for a serving of chips or a serving of cereal. It will surprise the students to see how much more that 1 serving they normally eat!

There are good and bad types of fat.

A little amount of the right type of fat is important for your body.

- Fat supports your growth and development. It is needed to build healthy cells.
- Fat helps maintain brain and nerve functions.
- It improves the taste of food.
- It makes you feel full longer.
- It provides essential fatty acids (not a bad thing, despite the name!) that your body can't make on its own.
- It helps you absorb certain vitamins (A, D, E, K).
- It supplies needed oils to skin and hair.

The best type of fat is found in natural, real foods such as nuts, avocados, fish, oils. etc.

But the type of fat found in fast food is called tran-fat or saturated fats and they are harmful to for your body.

Too much bad fat causes heart disease by clogging your arteries.



INVESTIGATION

Fat is measured by weight in grams.

12 grams of fat is equal to 1 Tablespoon

Divide the students into 3 groups and have each group go to an investigation station.

Have the students look at the packaging of the McDonald's items and find the nutrition label on the packaging.

Take the grams of fat per item and divide it by 12.

Big Mac

29 grams of fat

2.5 Tablespoons of fat

Large French fries

25 grams of fat

2 Tablespoons of fat

Large chocolate shake

16 grams of fat

1.5 Tablespoons

$2.5 + 2 + 1.5 = 6$ Tablespoons of fat in a McDonald's meal

Using Crisco, measure out 6 Tablespoons of fat and put it into a small ziplock bag.

This activity can get messy, so have paper towels available. The Crisco comes out of the Tablespoon much easier if the Tablespoon has been dipped in vegetable oil. It also helps to use the outside of the ziplock bag to scrape the Crisco out of the Tablespoon.

This McDonalds' meal has 70 grams of fat. A young person should have 50 to 65 grams of fat in one DAY! This meal has more fat than a young person should eat in an entire day.

? *Imagine this much fat going into your body every time they eat at McDonald's. How does this make you feel?*

? *When you do eat fast food, what could you do differently to make the meal healthier?*

- Order a small instead of a large
- Drink water instead of soda or shakes
- Try some of the healthy options on the menu (fresh fruit, salads with lower fat dressings)



COOKING

Today we're going to make a much better lunch than you'll ever get at McDonald's! Wraps are a quick and easy way to eat fresh, raw, real food loaded with nutrients.

COOKING SKILLS THIS SESSION

Introduce a vegetable peeler and grater—low-tech equipment that kids can easily use to prepare veggies.



EXPLORATION AT HOME

Have students discuss what we learned today with their families. Give them the challenge:

- If you do go to a fast food restaurant, try making healthier choices.
- Investigate your own cafeteria and discover some healthy choices at school lunches.

Pass out the invitation for final class celebration.