

## THE HIDDEN COST OF EATING OUT



Memo from MFJ

Over the last several decades, obesity rates have doubled in adults and tripled in children. And restaurant food deserves some of the blame.

If eating out were still a rare event, it wouldn't matter what restaurants served. In Canada, more than 40 cents out of every food dollar is spent outside the home. And what most people order isn't exactly spa food.

According to U.S. studies (there are no reliable Canadian figures), when people dine out, they typically eat more. For example, women who eat out more than five times a week consume nearly 300 more calories per day than women who eat out less often. And children consume an average of 770 calories in a restaurant meal—almost double the 440 calories they usually eat at home.

That should come as no surprise. What is surprising is that a Tim Hortons Carrot Whole Wheat Muffin has more calories than a Fireside Roast Beef Sandwich (even with the creamy dressing). And could you tell by looking that a large McDonald's Triple Thick Milkshake has more calories than two Quarter Pounders with Cheese? Shouldn't diners be able to take that into account before they decide what to order?

MP Tom Wappel of Scarborough Southwest (Ontario) thinks so. If passed, his Bill C-398 would require large chain fast-food restaurants to list calories next to prices on their menu boards. That's what six out of every 10 Canadians want, according to a national poll. The bill would also require large table-service chain restaurants to list calories, sodium, saturated fat, and trans fat.

There are no easy fixes for obesity, heart disease, and diabetes. But restaurants ought to give their customers a fighting chance.

	CALORIES	PRICE
FRUIT 'N YOGURT PARFAIT	160	1.99
SAUSAGE, EGG & CHEESE McGRIDDLES®	680	2.39
FILET-O-FISH®	400	2.69
CRISPY CHICKEN DELUXE®	450	3.99
QUARTER POUNDER WITH CHEESE®	500	3.19
BIG XTRA®	510	2.89
BIG MAC®	570	3.19
CHICKEN McGRILL®	380	3.89
DOUBLE BIG MAC®	680	4.29
DOUBLE QUARTER POUNDER WITH CHEESE®	720	4.39
TRIPLE THICK MILKSHAKE, CHOCOLATE (large)	1,170	3.49

Putting calories on fast-food menu boards would help consumers see the true cost of what they order.

### YOU CAN HELP

Please urge your MP to support Bill C-398. Check the Blue Pages of your telephone directory (under MP or Parliament), call 1-800-O-CANADA (1-800-622-6232), or visit our Web site (<http://cspinet.org/canada>) and click on "Fax Your MP."

Michael F. Jacobson, Ph.D.  
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