

VALUE [THE] MEAL

CHALLENGING CORPORATE ABUSE OF OUR FOOD



CORPORATE
ACCOUNTABILITY
INTERNATIONAL

IS FAST FOOD MAKING OUR CHILDREN SICK?

In recent years, health conditions associated with diet have accelerated at an alarming rate. Globally, one out of seven people is hungry. Now twice that number are overweight or obese; fully one third of our children are overweight or obese.

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Obesity predisposes our children to a host of chronic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension. Our kids are falling ill at younger and younger ages and at higher and higher rates. The Centers for Disease Control predicts one out of every three kids born in the year 2000 will develop type 2 diabetes in his or her lifetime. The generation growing up today may be the first with shorter life spans than their parents, and a diet high in unhealthy food — like fast food — is largely to blame.

But obesity is not our only concern. Recent studies have proven that not only is fast food high in ingredients that harm our health, but it also almost never meets the minimum nutrition standards for what children need to grow up healthy and strong.

CORPORATIONS ARE DRIVING THE HEALTH EPIDEMIC

The rapid rise in diet-related disease closely mirrors the expansion of fast food giants into markets across the globe. From the neighborhoods of Chicago to the streets of Mumbai, the fast food industry has built a business model around peddling food high in fat, salt and sugar to our children.

In the U.S., fast food giants purposefully sell their products near or in public schools and target inner cities, where a dearth of healthful food choices means easy profits. It may be a 40-minute bus ride to the nearest grocery store, but a typical inner-city child passes several fast food restaurants on the way to school. Then there are the 20% of public schools that sell branded fast food.

These global corporations spend hundreds of millions on marketing that appeals to our kids with the intent of hooking them for life. Even the most informed and vigilant parent is faced with an uphill battle, because many of these marketing techniques bypass parents entirely.





Your child might spend time playing a fast food video game online that links fast food products to his favorite cartoon characters, or get text messages on her cell phone with the latest promotion.

FAST FOOD GIANTS PASS THE BLAME—AND THE COST—TO US

Corporations like McDonald's have long trumpeted the mantra, "physical activity is the cure-all." So much for "you are what you eat." But no amount of exercise can compensate for the ill health effects of a diet high in fast food.

When fast food is exposed as unhealthy, the industry blames patrons for making poor dietary choices. It heralds seemingly healthy menu items, even while lobbying against laws that would protect our right to know what we are really getting when we order. The industry then pumps money into ad campaigns that align its products with healthy living, exercise promotion, and sponsorships of health groups like the American Dietetic Association.

These corporations can't have it both ways. Not when the direct and indirect costs of diet-related disease are costing us well over \$120 billion each year in the U.S. alone.

IT'S TIME TO VALUE [THE] MEAL

Everyone needs access to enough affordable, healthy food. It's time that the fast food industry be held accountable for its role in making our children sick. Together we can ensure a healthier future for generations to come.

WE CALL ON THE FAST FOOD INDUSTRY TO:

- Stop fast food marketing, promotion and sponsorship that appeals to children and teenagers
- Stop manipulating public health policy and nutrition science
- Provide complete, accurate and non-promotional information about the health risks of fast food
- Reduce the negative health impacts of fast food
- Pay the high costs of health care associated with diet-related diseases
- Do not interfere with people's right to decide whether or where fast food will be sold in their communities