“Food Value”: Cost to your Health or your Wallet?

Requesting McDonalds and other establishments to decrease portion sizes, and offer healthier and smarter food choices in advertising.

Tag Words: food marketing; calorie portions; food deals; food choices; restriction; obesity; American obesity; portion sizes; convenience; NYC Drink Ban; McDonalds; body signals about hunger

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Summary (EN)

Our project issue pertains to the fast food chains and other restaurants offering super-sized drinks and unhealthy items on the value menus that are contributing to the obesity epidemic. Due to this marketing, people are not listening to their body’s signals regarding how hungry they truly are. Our project is aimed at doing at persuading the fast food chains to choose to offer good deals and market smaller, healthier portions so that Americans will follow suit to make good, healthy choices and portion sizes, thus allowing them to listen to their body’s signals to tell them how hungry they truly are. In order to help combat this over-consumption, we will write letters to the restaurant CEOs and persuade them to offer smaller, healthier options by showing them how their company can benefit from doing so. We will also write letters to the editor of Women’s Health magazine to encourage them to continue demonstrating the negative side of these large portions and how these restaurant CEOs are contributing negatively to nutrition and behavior.

Video Link (NKO)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSBeyq09EfI

Dinner for 1 or dinner for 2? (NKO)

The value of a portion size has become an emerging area of conflict. Where once portion sizes use to be a smaller serving, now consumers are seeking to have double and even triple the amount of a regular serving. In order to help this issue, the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act was instituted by the United states Food and Drug Administration in 1994 and also the Recommended Dietary Allowances in 1968. Over the years as more ways of marketing foods were becoming prominent people sought to find ways of obtaining more of these foods. As television sets and radios become popular the rate of obesity become directly proportional. The correlation here shows that the marketing of more fast foods greatly affected the portion consumption of society.
To clearly show this correlation we see in Figure 1, how the Center for Disease Control is able to greatly show the evolution of the portion sizes from the 1950s to now while showing how the consumer has also evolved. In the 1950’s the portions of fast foods were less and consumers were able to balance their weight gain. Presently the new norms for food sizes would be viewed as abnormal to consumers from the past. According to the info graph, consumers’ portions have been escalating and so have their weights.

Figure 1: Center for Disease Control (CDC) Evolution of Portion Sizes

![portion sizes](image)

**Benefits of food portion control** (NKO)

The body is an intricate system with its own regulation mechanisms. If the body needs something it responds and sends a signal for more of that item and when it has excess it can put things away for storage. When the body gets begins storage, is where consumers can face possible difficulties. The over-consumption of all nutrients such as carbohydrates, proteins and fats, can lead to the storage of fat. According to metabolic pathways, any of these macronutrients that the body does not digest and use are converted into new fats and eventually stored. Now we have excess of nutrients in the body, which can yield fat synthesis.

Portion control can facilitate in the buildup of fat storage by aiming at the amounts that consumers directly ingest. It is very hard for the human mind to measure the proper sizes that are required for the average body and that is why restaurants are needed to help facilitate this plan. For this reason, the
Recommended Dietary Amounts (RDA) serve as a rubric to guide consumption. RDA values are usually not listed in most food places, but restaurants usually use terms such as “servings” to indicate how much of that item should be eaten. RDA values are slowly beginning to lose their significance in the American diet and food industry. These recommended portions are slowly deviating from the idea of nutrition and health causing a greater problem to emerge within the food industry.

**Where the Problem Stems From:**
**The American Values: Monetary over Nutritional**

Value can be determined based on the factors that one considers to be of utmost importance. Americans primarily value two things: the freedom of choice and money. Both of these two factors are important but cause problems when we prioritize them together, before we prioritize the opportunity to live a long and healthy life for ourselves and for our families. For example, Americans are willing to do anything to save money and get a good deal, even when it hurts us in the long run. Therefore, we prematurely make decisions about the quality and quantity of food we consume for dinner, without carefully considering the harm we are doing to our bodies by sacrificing nutritional value.

The marketing departments of fast food chains, restaurants, diners, etc. are fully aware of Americans need to feel like they are getting a good deal and they take full advantage of it. Companies like McDonalds have created “Extra Value Meals” and “Dollar Menus” to draw in a large clientele. They offer a “McDouble” hamburger for $1.00 which seems like a good deal. However, with that comes 19 grams of fat, including 8 grams of saturated fat which is 42% of the percent daily value based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

McDonald’s also offers deals such as 2 for $3.00, knowing that Americans will see this deal, feel they are getting a good “bang for their buck”, or rather a good value, and they will act accordingly. However with this, Americans are purchasing twice the amount of food they may have originally planned on purchasing and while they are getting an increased quantity of product for their money, they are also getting a significant increase in caloric and fat intake. As demonstrated in the table below, for every extra ounce of soda that the consumer consumes, they are also getting an additional 9.6 calories and 2.6 grams of sugar.

**Figure 2:** Table of Nutritional Facts for a McDonald’s Coca-Cola
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<th></th>
<th>(12 ounces)</th>
<th>(21 ounces)</th>
<th>(32 ounces)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calories</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grams of Sugar</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>$1.15</td>
<td>$1.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: McDonalds.com: Nutrition Facts*

Companies such as McDonalds also do a great job advertising these “great” deals on unhealthy food options, which fool Americans to think they are getting a good value and thus play a psychological role in persuading Americans to stop by and place an order. McDonalds is fully benefitting from this, as their profits has been rising as the economy remains tough. Americans also walk away think they are getting a lot for their money. However, Americans can barely walk away with the obesity epidemic that results.

Americans are distracted by a good deal and they give in to purchasing this unhealthy food. They are so distracted by getting a good deal because they primarily connect value and a deal to the monetary value as opposed to the nutritional value.

**Who is to blame? (NKO)**

Even though the problem can be identified, the question remains who is to blame and how can we fix it. When choosing the right selections consumers look at the palatability of the food, availability and the price. Marketers of restaurants are able to use all three of these characteristics and thrive on them to help satisfy consumers needs. Marketers aim to kill two birds with one stone and use customer satisfaction as a way to push out their products and simultaneously profit. If consumers are looking to get the most for their dollars, then they will in fact be attracted to promotional bargains. Majority of these promotional bargains exploit the recommended portion sizes but when choosing the cheapest food item this is usually the route that consumers will pick.

Food media tactics have allowed the average consumer to be comfortable in their food selections by rewarding them with a system of disproportional meals. In a study done at the School of Public Health in Minneapolis, the results of the experiment showed that the impact of a 50% price reduction on fresh fruits and vegetables encouraged students to purchase those items. Compared to the other items such as cookies and sodas, which stayed at regular price, the healthier items were purchased. Consumer eating choices are greatly impacted by the marketing of cheap prices no matter what the items may be. Here we see how the direct act of promoting foods at a cheaper price guided student consumers to purchase those items. From this it may be better to conclude that as consumers become comfortable with the foods they constantly eat, and the constant selling price of these foods their consumption of such foods will only increase. Simultaneously the portions which consumers ingest will skyrocket as well.
Consuming unnecessarily large portions is a problem from a nutritional perspective because it causes Americans to consume more calories and fat than they expend. When calories in are greater than calories out, weight is gained. When this occurs frequently, especially as our lifestyles become more sedentary, an obesity epidemic is the result. The body mass index is a scale that is based off of the following factors: sex, age, height and weight. An example of a scale is shown above in Figure 3, which also demonstrates (in red) that obesity occurs when the person's weight is very high, relative to their sex, age and height.

**Figure 4**: An Increase in Obesity Rates for Adults and Teens
Obesity rates have increased rather steeply in the past 2 decades. Current statistics, according to the Center for Disease control, suggest that approximately 35.7% of U.S. adults are obese. This problem extends to children as well, for an approximate 17% (12.5 million) of children aged 2—19 years are obese. Figure 4, as shown above, demonstrates the trend of how quickly these percentages have been rising over the years.

**Your portion size is who you are** (NKO)

Habits develop after the act of doing something, is repeated over a constant course of time. One of the most important habits of most consumers pertains to eating. Consumer habits are influenced greatly by the availability and advertisement of the actual item. The common phrase “you are what you eat” can have several meanings. It refers mostly to how food makes the body. Food is any item that contributes to the overall nutrient of a consumer. Food here serves as the essential building block that helps build the different parts of our body.

On the other hand this phrase also applies to the consumer itself and who they are independently from the food. A consumer develops their eating habits over a lifespan and uses these practices to make their everyday meal selections. This is why finding approaches to portion control maybe in fact more difficult than expected. To see change in the consumer, there must also be change in their individual habits. “You are what you eat” is a phrase that depicts the idea that a consumer is independent from the food choices they make simply because they have habits that intervene in making the best decisions. Now not only must we target the control of portion sizes, but also try to find a way to alter bad habits
Listening to when you’re hungry, the science behind it: (EN)

When Americans see the “2 for” deals, the natural inclination is to purchase two. However, that often leads to eating both in one sitting. Even if one went through the drive thru because they were hungry, chances are they didn’t need to consume so many calories and grams of fat to appease their body.

When we are distracted by the monetary value and disregard the nutritional value, we also disregard our bodies signals to tell us when to eat. The human body uses the endocrine system to tell us when we are hungry. Hormones such as ghrelin are released in our body and let our brain know that we must consume food and energy. When we eat, mechanoreceptors in the stomach feel the stomach walls stretching and tell our brain to stop eating. Fat cells also secrete leptin, which travels to the brain to tell us to stop eating.

This whole series of hormonal events takes time. It takes about 20 minutes for our hormones to tell us to eat, respond to the mechanoreceptors, secrete hormones to send a message to the brain to then tell us we do not need to continue eating. However, it doesn’t take us 20 minutes to eat that first hamburger. So when we still think we are hungry and that second hamburger is there, we eat it. When in fact, we should wait 20 minutes to see what our body tells us. These high quantities and high portions of food that we buy because they are a good deal, prevent us from taking the time to listen to our bodies and what it needs. We then get into a pattern of eating however much we want when we want and we ignore our bodies signals until we have already eaten too much.

Attempts Towards a Solution
Restriction: (EN)

New York Mayor, Michael Bloomberg, has made an effort to lessen America’s problem with obesity in his attempt to ban 32 ounce drink sizes at restaurants and fast food chains. His philosophy behind this is to prevent Americans from having the option of supersizing to a 32 ounce drink by making them see if a smaller portion is enough to please their body or satisfy their craving. There are many pros and cons of this attempt.

Bloomberg has it right when he concludes that these unnecessarily large portion sizes cause Americans to consume excess calories. Excess calories refers to an intake that is higher than the amount of calories that would be burned, thus leading to weight gain, which then contributes to the obesity epidemic. His attempt to ban the large sizes could ideally cut part of the problem at its’ origin. However, his method in doing so creates many problems, from both a civil and a nutrition and behavior perspective.

When Mayor Bloomberg creates a ban against 32 ounce drinks, he is restricting their options. Studies show that restricting likely to backfire, for humans in general always want what they cannot have. Therefore, by banning larger drinks, Americans will want these drinks even more.
Studies suggest that instead of restricting options, it is better to provide all options in accordance with the education necessary so that Americans can make the right decisions for themselves: because they choose to, not because they do not have the freedom to.

**Guiding consumers through** (NKO)

Like in the prohibition of alcohol, a resistance was formed and rebellion flourished greatly. Similarly, the ideas of prohibition and restriction have all been methods to stop the abuse of food portions. Actions such as banning certain items, limiting food and drink sizes and even reducing availability, has only lead to consumers finding other ways to get these restricted items. Restriction when dealing with food has to be done in an indirect manner, or it may steer things left. When dealing with food and drink intake, adult consumers think and choose like a younger consumer would. Even though it is expected for an adult consumer to have more control than a young consumer, the behavioral patterns of the two become the comparable.

According to a study, a younger consumer will independently choose the food that is appealing at first sight. Here one can see that this behavior would also hold true for an adult consumer because consumers eat with their eyes first. According to what the study implies, an ice cream sundae would appear more appealing than a plate of broccoli and chicken because of how we have been taught to look at the two foods. From young, a consumer is guided either by the media, a parent and even peers on how to form conceptions on different foods. These conceptions are in fact the habits that were mentioned in the previous selection that interfere with controlling food portions. The main problem here is that instead of fixing one problem, restriction in itself is creating many other sources of conflict. Restriction is not a proper guide that can help proper food selection but instead it reprimands a consumer without an explanation to why their food selections are unhealthy.

**Market This or Market That** (NKO)

With this emerging issue of portion sizes, a paradigm has correspondingly formed. If managing the portion size of foods is a big issue, it maybe best to target the area that intervenes between choosing what is right and wrong. The plan follows the idea of anti prohibition and instead promotes guiding consumers. The form of guiding that will be used here will be indirect because it will strategically use marketing and promotional ideas that most restaurants and branches already use. The proposed solution is for many fast food restaurants and sit down restaurants to make more of an effort in advertising the items that are healthier choices. While the restaurant may still keep the heavy caloric foods on their actual menu, they will be encouraged to bring the healthier choices to the light. A menu item that goes unnoticed or receives no additional promotion will eventually decrease in its sales. So in reality, this proposed method is not to restrict and not to impose ideas, but to simply sell and market healthier menu items.

The best way for this plan to work is to try and satisfy the needs of all participants. This includes the restaurant, specifically McDonalds, and the consumer. The changes that will be made will be minimal for the organization but have a drastic effect on consumer health. Restaurants will not have to change
their exact menu, but they may have to remodel and create more marketing to promote more nutrition. In regards to consumers, if this is put into practice, overtime there could be an increase in overall consumer health and hopefully a decrease in obesity rates.

**Culture sensitivity and marketing** (NKO)

Although each country's food culture is different, that can not be the biggest difference between better and poor health choices. At the end of the day, if McDonald's in India has healthier options than the McDonald's of America they are still the same company with the same corporate values. What differs between the two is the cultural sensitivity and how that has an impact on how restaurants market their products to the public.

A way to help McDonald's and other restaurants see the value of promoting healthier ideas is by showing them what a culture considers sensitive. Food sensitivity can relate to many things such as culture, nutrition based on age, food portioning and also food pricing. Restaurants, such as McDonalds are infatuated with the idea of meeting consumer needs by any mean necessary. By Americans voicing their dietary beliefs and opinions on nutrition, this can begin the shift towards getting McDonalds to market differently. This can involve greater solutions such as furthering what we know through research or even be something as little as writing comments or letters to cooperate itself.

**Models of Success**

**Marketing of healthy traditional and cultural foods** (NKO)

The reconstruction of marketing will certainly be of good use, because other countries have embodied marketing healthier McDonald items into their food culture. With efforts to satisfying the consumer needs McDonald branches in other countries have developed their marketing in meeting the needs of international countries. These needs, much like Americans consist of price and availability except for health. More international countries focus more on the health aspect when dealing with fast foods. For them it is more about what they can obtain away from home that is nutritious.

In Japan the cultures sensitivity is also formed around being economical controlling portion sizes. Here, the Japanese McDonald’s have more portion control over their beverages, by reducing the ounces for each drink size. Their marketing efficiently makes an American medium a Japanese large, an American small a Japanese medium and an American kids size a Japanese small size. At the end of it all the Japanese society remains satisfied with what McDonalds corporation promotes.

In a vegetarian society like India, although beef products are sold at McDonald's, marketing has also obtained vegetarian products to show their acceptance and thought on healthier products to suit the Indian food culture. To bring attention to a new and healthy product, McDonald's has given the item a cultural name that is also suitable to the restaurants catchy themes. The McVeggie and the Maharaja
Mac¹ are two famous special sandwiches for the Indian culture.¹¹ Both are marketed and show better health choices as opposed to a regular Big Mac burger.

**Target the Companies as a Solution** (EN)

Our solution targets the companies as opposed to the general public since the companies are responsible for giving the options to the general public and therefore have more power in controlling the menu options the consumers have. By getting our point across to the corporations in charge, they have the opportunity and the ability to spread a healthier movement down to the consumer level. Ideally, we would like the portion sizes that restaurants and fast food chains offer to be smaller and therefore healthier and we would like these options to be promoted and marketed more than the unhealthy options. However, in accordance with studies on restriction, we want the fast food chains to have the option to serve any size portion they want, but we want to persuade them to choose to offer more reasonable portions for the betterment of America, not because they have no choice.

Therefore, our service project involves sending two different persuasive letters to different departments within the McDonalds corporations. We are sending these letters to the headquarters because they are in part responsible for promoting obesity through their mechanisms of marketing unhealthy and excessive products. We try to motivate McDonalds to make the necessary changes by explaining how their current behavior and way of doing things can benefit their company. Such changes benefit their corporation in that it provides them a leadership opportunity in which they can lead the way for other fast food chain restaurants to take a stand and discourage the promotion of unhealthy portion sizes. It can also provide the opportunity to increase company sales and profits. For example, by changing their menu accordingly and by offering smaller portion sizes, people who genuinely want 32 ounces of soda will have to purchase two 16 ounce sodas, thus increasing their profits.

**Reasons why this solution has potential:** (EN)

Our service project primarily targets the large name fast food restaurants because they have the power to make a difference, as they are responsible for serving millions of Americans. While the success of the service project relies on if McDonalds makes changes to their portion sizes and the products in which they choose to offer, it also relies on the participation and activism of American consumers, who have the ability to encourage McDonalds corporation to make these changes.

McDonalds has made great strides in offering healthier options after being bombarded by Americans who asked them to do so. For example, McDonald’s has since added fruit and yogurt parfaits, salads, and other healthy options. They also now provide the nutrition facts on the wrappers of their menu items. All of these changes are steps in the right direction but there is still more that can be done. The goal of our service project was to write persuasive letters that suggest that McDonalds gets rid of their large portion sizes and that they offer more promotions to encourage Americans to make healthy options.

Therefore, the success of this service project is highly likely if other Americans also write letters to corporate and to the marketing and advertising departments at McDonalds and other fast food chain
restaurants. McDonalds has made great strides to offer healthier options at the request of many customers suggesting it. Therefore, part of the service project includes a short video, found on YouTube, to help educate and encourage the consumers about the importance of this issue and ways in which the consumers can help make a difference too.

**Written Outreach: (EN)**

Our solution to the problem involves writing letters to the McDonalds corporation. The letters tackle the points such as why does McDonalds offer such large portion sizes, why don’t they try to offer higher quality choices in terms of nutrition and why do they use marketing techniques to promote the sales of unhealthy choices, which combined contribute to America’s obesity epidemic. The persuasive letters that were sent to the corporate headquarters at McDonalds are shown below. The letter is aimed at the marketing department and specifically pertains to why they promote unhealthy food with good deals, as opposed to encouraging healthier choices for better deals. For example, why are the Egg McMuffins 2 for $3.00, since that will continue to encourage poor health decisions to be made. Although there are healthier food items available on the McDonalds menu, they aren't advertised and encouraged enough, especially when the rest of the McDonalds menus contain items filled with high calories and unhealthy fats. The letters also aim to convince the McDonalds corporation to offer and encourage smaller portion sizes, not because of a possible ban in New York, but because it would be the right thing to do, in the sense that it would help Americans choose the better option for their body and for their health.

**Letter One to McDonalds Corporation:**

McDonald's Corporation, 2111 McDonald's Dr., Oak Brook, IL 60523  
Mailed Wednesday, July 25, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

I am sure you have heard about the New York mayor who is attempting to ban large sizes, as he is convinced he that this is a contributing factor to America’s obesity epidemic. I am writing to you because I would like to ask why you offer and promote such large portion sizes? I feel that Americans are obsessed with getting the most they can for their money and the nutritional value of the food takes the backburner to the quantity. Therefore, by offering an increased portion of food and drinks for not much more money, people are easily tempted to follow suit and get the best deal. This leads to an unhealthy and unnecessary increase in calories. I feel that by offering better promotions on healthier items, people will be more likely to choose them over the Quarter Pounder with cheese. In this manner, you have the opportunity to help fix America’s obesity problem.

While I must agree with the New York mayor on the fact that the portion sizes that are offered are ridiculous. People are consuming way too many calories, too quickly, and do not learn to wait and let their body tell them when they are full. I do not think that it is legally acceptable to ban a specific drink size, but I feel that choosing to offer smaller portions could be beneficial for both America’s weight and for your company. If you no longer offer 32-ounce drinks, people will not be able to buy them. They may still order a large, but if the large is smaller than the current size, they will then not have that increased excess calorie intake. Or, if someone truly wants 32 ounces of soda, they can purchase two 16-ounce drinks, which would increase your sales and your profits.
Thank you for your time and I would appreciate if you take these thoughts into consideration via changes in the food items that you offer promotions on and in the portion sizes available on your menu.

Sincerely,
Emily Nowlin

Letter Two:
McDonald’s Corporation, Marketing and Advertising Department
Sent To: 1 McDonald'S Plaza Oak Brook, IL, United States
Date Sent: July 24, 2012

To whom it may concern

There has been a lot of talk regarding portion sizes that are being sold by restaurants and food chains. The approach that is being used here is the idea of prohibition and restricting people by means of promoting better nutrition. This attempt will not be the most effective way to resolve the issues with portion control of food and instead it may cause another issue. For this reason I am writing to your fast food company with ideas on how to avoid restriction and instead promote making healthier choices.

Your restaurant is infamous for “getting more for the buck”. While this is a great concept for people in our economical times, it is a segue to chronic food related illnesses that challenge our health. Marketing and promoting of two items for the price of one, is one of the things that targets the frugal minds of consumers. A better way to for your food chain to profit is to allow people to spend more if they want to eat more. If a consumer wishes to consume a 32 oz. Soda let them do so by purchasing two drinks and two prices than one price.

The best solution to this problem would be a resolution with minimal changes to your company's menu. Nutrition has become a mental issue and with that its conflicts can also be solved by targeting the consumers mind frame. Another proposed method is decrease the promotional ads and deals that encourage consumption of empty calorie foods. When this marketing has decreased an increase in promotions that supports choosing, fruits, whole grains, veggies and protein can emerge.

I hope that you can strongly see the relationship between food portions and marketing. To help people understand their food portioning I wish that you consider the idea that I have proposed to you. Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Natasha Kachikwu- Oweh
References


Appendices

Figure 1: Center for Disease Control (CDC) Evolution of Portion Sizes

![Evolution of Portion Sizes](image)

Figure 2: Table of Nutritional Facts for a McDonald’s Coca-Cola

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Small (12 ounces)</th>
<th>Medium (21 ounces)</th>
<th>Large (32 ounces)</th>
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<td>210</td>
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<td>Grams of Sugar</td>
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<td>Cost</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>$1.15</td>
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Source: McDonalds.com: Nutrition Facts
Figure 3: Body Mass Index Scale according to WebMD

Source: http://www.webmd.com/diet/calc-bmi-plus

Figure 4: An Increase in Obesity Rates for Adults and Teens

Tracking a health problem
U.S. obesity rates have climbed for men and boys and stabilized for women and girls.

Adult obesity rates
(Age 20 and older)

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>'09-'10</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
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Child and teen obesity rates
(2 to 19 years of age)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'99-'03</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'03-'04</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>'09-'10</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Obesity is defined in children and teens as being at/above the 95th percentile of body mass index for age growth charts.
Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey

Dear Editor,

Your newsletter is an inspiring outlet for a dietetic mind to share their thoughts, ideas and solutions towards helping the health and nutrition of others. For this reason I plan to discuss the issue with food marketing and the consumption of food. While many fast food chains and restaurant branches tend to have a variety of selection on their menus, they only advertise the “empty” items, which serve no vital usage for the human health and nutrition. Of all items on the menu, why is it that food organizations only wish to market those unhealthy selections?

A fast pace society and unstable economy is the best growing environment for most food marketers. Where once consumers would struggle with the availability of healthy foods, now the problem is the lack of advertisement of such foods. Food marketing has given fast food chains the opportunity to benefit at the risk of their buyers. Convenience is used here as an advantage for organizations. During these economic times people depend on food convenience because its cheap, fast and readily available. The deal, “2 sandwiches for $3” will sound enticing to the average consumer in such times. At this point it is either our health or being economical.

What many consumers fail to realize is that the long term damages of instant gratification are always worse than what is expected. We see food chains selling the idea of over-consumption for less and the belly of an economical consumer never sees two of a product being worse than one. This shows how something so simple such as company marketing can have such a great influence on the health rate of everyday people.

With that being said, a proposed solution to organizational marketing can in fact be the thing to help reduce cardiovascular problems and help lower obesity rates. I want to praise the attempts of many states of trying to ban certain portion sizes, but prohibition is simply is not the proper route. Discouraging poor food selections and marketing better food deals will help. Food chains can keep their original menus while marketing more items such as, fruits, veggies, proteins and dairy products. Marketing is great but why not market smarter and healthier. The best changes are the changes that have a silent effect on the majority of the population. What better way to help consumers than to aim at promoting better health and nutrition.

Sincerely,
Natasha Kachikwu-Oweh
Dear Editor,

I would like to thank you for publishing the articles: “The 18 Worst breakfast Sandwiches” and “The 19 Best Breakfasts” in the “Eat This, Not That” section of your magazine. As a nutritional science student at Rutgers University, with a special interest on nutrition and behavior, I admire the way in which you use your magazine to educate the public and demonstrate the nutritional value of various options at restaurants.

In my opinion, people are relying more and more on the convenience of food. With the economy the way it is, budgets are tighter and consumers are more focused on getting a good value, or rather and increased quantity of food, for their money. I think it’s a problem that Americans are associating value with the monetary value and the quantity of food they are getting, without taking the nutritional value into consideration.

I feel that companies such as McDonalds are encouraging consumers to supersize their already unhealthy food choices with the “2 for $3” deals, the “any size drink for the same price” and the 32-ounce drink sizes they offer. I feel that the idea of getting the most ‘bang for your buck’ is distracting consumers from consuming the amount of food that the body is saying it needs. I think it is important to educate the public and make them more aware of the increased amount of calories, bad fats, and sugars that they are consuming when they increase their portions.

I thank you for taking the time to present the nutritional values of these popular breakfast items to the public and for encouraging the public to think about how much food, calories, and fat they really want to consume next time they are asked to supersize their order.

Sincerely,
Emily Nowlin

Articles pertaining to this letter can be found at the following links:
http://eatthis.menshealth.com/slideshow/18-worst-breakfasts
**THE VALUE OF PORTION SIZE**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Small (2 ounces)</th>
<th>Medium (21 ounces)</th>
<th>Large (20 ounces)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calories</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grams of Sugar</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>$1.15</td>
<td>$1.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Costs may vary at different locations*

**Per ounce:**
- $0.04 to $0.083
- 9.6 calories
- 2.6 grams of sugar

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**THE PROBLEM**

- **Large Portion Sizes**
  - Portion sizes have increased over time
- **Unhealthy Food**
  - Advertised
  - Radio, Television, Media
  - Promoted
  - 2 for $3.00

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**RESULTS FROM PROBLEM**

- **Overconsumption of Food**
  - Not Listening to our bodies signals (hormones)
  - Obesity Epidemic: Percentage on a steep incline
  - Adults
  - Children

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**CAUSE OF PROBLEM**

- **Factors that Comprise Value**
  - Cost
  - Quantity
  - Quality; Nutritional Benefit
PRIMARY MESSAGE

By choosing a large soda instead of a medium, you get:
- An extra 12 ounces of soda for 50 cents more,
- BUT you also get an additional
  - 100 calories
  - 50 grams of sugar

DO YOU REALLY NEED A LARGE?

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT THIS?

Our Service Project:
- Persuasive letters mailed to McDonalds
- Corporation Headquarters
- Marketing & Advertising Department

GOALS OF OUR LETTERS

Goal of letter:
- More promotions for healthier items
- More advertising of healthier options
- Emphasis on nutritional value
- Do emphasize cost to size value
- Discontinue large portion sizes

In the end, this should decrease the amount of unnecessary calories Americans consume in an effort to get the "best deal."

SUCCESS IN NUMBERS

- McDonalds has been pressured by consumers like YOU to take steps in the right direction

- Examples:
  - Salads and Fruit Parfaits offered
  - Although no promotions/deals like there are for unhealthy choices
  - Nutrition facts on food wrapping
  - Portion sizes are too large

HELP SPREAD THE WORD!

Write letters to McDonalds and other fast food chains

Address:
- McDonald's Corporation, 2111 McDonald's Dr., Oak Brook, IL 60523
- McDonald's Marketing & Advertising Department, 1 McDonald's Plaza, Oak Brook, IL 60523

- Ask them to:
  - Advertise and promote healthier menu items
  - Discontinue large portion sizes