

13 Things Fast Food Does to Your Body

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Packs on the Pounds

Fast food is convenient and cheap, but you pay a bigger price in the long run. Those burgers, fries, and shakes usually have more fat, calories, and highly processed carbs than your body needs in one meal. This can quickly lead to weight gain and obesity if you eat it often.



Harms Your Heart

Sodium makes fast food taste better and keeps it from spoiling. But just one bacon cheeseburger can contain your recommended daily value for sodium. That's the amount of a nutrient experts suggest getting every day. Too much sodium raises your blood pressure and damages your blood vessels. It also raises your risk for heart failure, heart attack, and stroke.



Spikes Blood Sugar

Bagels, buns, and breaded foods are high in processed carbs your body breaks down into sugar. As blood sugar levels rise, your body pumps out insulin to level things out. Over time, these constant sugar spikes can wear out your pancreas (the organ that makes insulin). This keeps blood sugar levels high, triggering type 2 diabetes.



Opens the Door to Digestive Issues

Fast food may taste good, but you may not feel well once it hits your system. High-sodium foods (fries, anyone?) can temporarily trigger bloat. Couple that with low amounts of dietary fiber, and your digestive tract gets backed up. This can lead to constipation that puts you at risk for hemorrhoids, hernias, and diverticulitis.



Affects Your Mood

What you eat and drink can impact how you feel mentally and physically. Fast food lacks the vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients your body needs to boost your mood. Research suggests fast and processed foods you buy at the store may be linked to a higher risk of depression.



Makes You Tired

When a bunch of processed carbs hit your system, your blood sugar rises quickly, then drops just as fast. This can make you feel tired. If you grab a sugary coffee drink to wake up, the cycle starts all over again.



Could Impact Your Fertility

Phthalates, synthetic chemicals that dissolve materials and make plastics durable, are in everything from toys to fast food. Recent studies have linked phthalates with fertility issues and higher risks of learning and behavioral disorders in children.



Changes Your Bathroom Habits

Because it's highly processed, fast food -- especially the kind that's fried or creamy -- can be hard to digest. If your body can't break it down, it lands in your colon and turns into fatty acids that spark diarrhea.



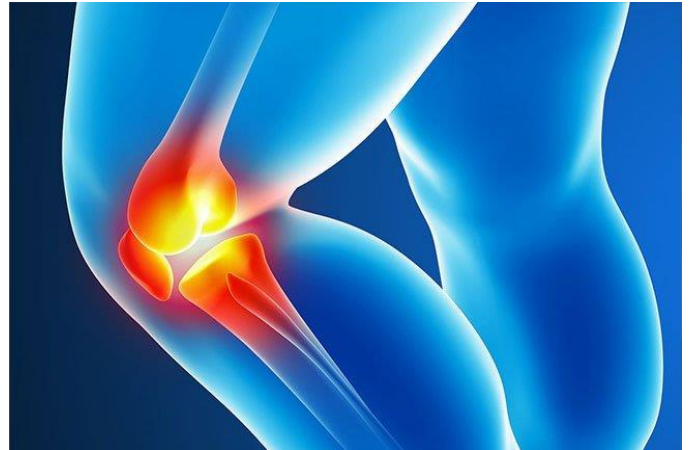
Invites Dental Disease

The high levels of carbs and sugar in fast food, including sodas, raises the amount of acids in your mouth. These wear down the enamel on your teeth and boosts your risk of cavities, tooth decay, and gum disease.



Wears Out Your Bones and Joints

Excess weight and obesity caused by fast food puts extra pressure on your joints, especially your hips and knees. This makes you more likely to get fractures in the bones around your joints.



Raises Your Risk for Respiratory Issues

One fried chicken dinner won't affect the way you breathe. But too much fast food can lead to extra weight that increases your risk of asthma, especially in women. More research is needed to know exactly why, but early studies show that fat tissue leads to inflammation that may affect your lungs.



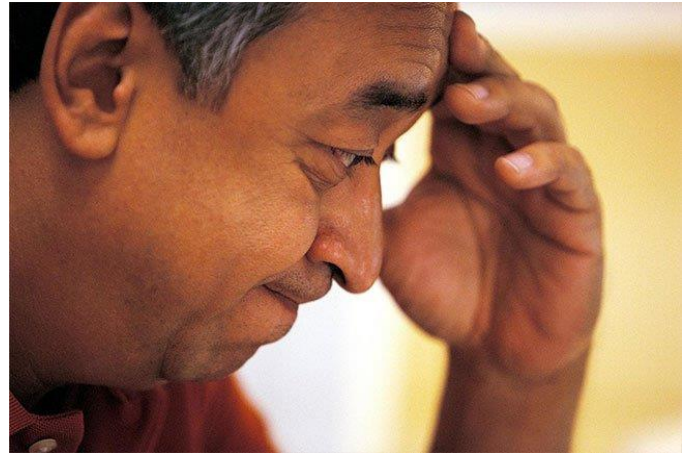
Causes Skin Outbreaks

Fast food is full of ingredients that don't play well with your skin. Sugar can lower collagen levels and lead to signs of early aging, like wrinkles. Salt drains moisture from your skin, but it helps your body keep the water that causes bags under your eyes. High amounts of saturated fats trigger hormones that play a role in acne.



Affects Your Memory

Experts think saturated and trans fats tell your body to make plaques in the brain. These cause dementia and raise your risk of Alzheimer's disease three times more than those who don't eat fast food.



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