

Junk Food

Written by W.J.Pais

How do you define junk food? It's high in calories, low in nutrition. And there's much worse, in the Junk Food Facts.

Junk food is everywhere. You and your family probably eat it every day. Sugar-laden breakfast cereals, snack bars, biscuits and cakes, crisps and chips, soft drinks, sweets, ready-meals, fast food like burgers - so much of what's on offer on the supermarket shelves is produced on the cheap (but not sold cheaply), full of unhealthy ingredients - it's not nutritious, it's laced with addictively tasty fats, sugars and salt, it just is not worth eating.

Junk Food - it's aptly named. Now, wise up on the junk food facts.

JUNK FOOD FACTS - CHILDREN

- The junk food industry **deliberately targets children** as young as 2 in a bid to create brand preference and lifelong loyalty.
- Advertisers question kids and tap into their play to create ads and **products with guaranteed child-appeal**
- . Fast food chains use the lure of free toys to get kids to persuade their parents to spend. A desirable toy can double or triple weekly sales of kids' meals. And every child brings along at least one adult too.
 - Artificial flavours in foods aimed at kids can be **twice as sweet** as the artificial flavours used in adult food. Children are being trained to find the natural bitter or sour notes that mingle with the sweetness in natural foods unpalatable.
 - Many children now **prefer man-made flavours** to the taste of real food. How will they ever switch to fresh, unadulterated food?
 - Flavourings and colourings can **cause asthma, rashes and hyperactivity**. Many countries – but not the UK – ban them from children's food.
 - **UK companies spend £300m annually** on ads aimed at kids. The average British child watches tv for 2 hrs 20 mins daily.
 - Children in the US have over \$500bn a year to spend. The average American kid spends 25 hours a week watching tv, and **sees around 20,000 ads a year for junk food**. That's one every 5 mins as they watch, and 3 hours of them in any one week...

JUNK FOOD FACTS – SOFT DRINKS

- The **metal can costs more than the ingredients**, which are primarily water mixed with additives, sugar or sweetener, and caffeine. A can of cola contains 10 teaspoons of sugar.
- Soft drinks are aggressively marketed by fast food chains, because they are so profitable, at around **97% profit on the price per cup**. The bigger the cup, the greater the profit.

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- In the US, average adult consumption of soft drinks is around **500 cans a year**.
- Twenty per cent of **American under-2s are given soft drinks** – laden with sugar and additives – every day.

DISGUSTING JUNK FOOD FACTS ABOUT THE FOOD ON YOUR PLATE

- **Canned spaghetti**

A helping of carbohydrate, salt and sugar, with virtually no fibre, anyone?

- **Chicken nuggets**

Low cost nuggets are cheap because they contain as little as 16% pulped chicken, bulked out with water, chicken skin, proteins removed from bone, hide, or poultry feathers, mechanically retrieved meat; plus the ubiquitous sugar, additives and salt.

They also contain bulking agents used to soak up the water that's injected into chicken to increase the weight – and the profit. Minced meat can hide a multitude of revolting 'extras' : carcinogenic antibiotics, recycled cat food, and poultry mixed with beef proteins have all been found in chicken destined for the production line.

- **Chocolate muffin**

Ruinously high in sugar, and made with the big baddie of the junk food industry, partially hydrogenated vegetable oil which has zero nutritional value, and damages heart and arteries.

- **Fries**

Fat-packed and low in nutrients. May be coated with additives and salt.

- **Fruit yoghurts, ready-made sauces, fruit drinks, baby foods – and more...**

Modified starches, along with colourings and flavourings, mimic the texture of fresh fruit and veg, so that manufacturers' can use less of the real thing. They also mask rancid flavours' and smells.

- **Milkshakes**

A simple-sounding ingredient, like 'artificial strawberry flavor' can in itself contain around 50 chemicals. And not one single strawberry...

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