

Almost a day's worth of calories hidden in fast food meal combos

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Tempted to reach for the food delivery app to get your favourite fast food fix during lockdown? New research from The George Institute for Global Health shows some popular fast food chains are serving up

almost all your daily energy needs in a single meal.

According to the "FoodSwitch: State of the Fast Food Supply" report, the Red Rooster Bacon and Cheese Rippa single meal consisting of one Bacon and Cheese Rippa Roll, large (by default) fries and coke contained 7730kJ per serving, or 89 percent of the average adult daily energy intake.

With the gym still off-limits, this Rippa meal could leave you less than ripped, taking over five hours of walking or two and a half hours of running to burn off. It also packs a salty punch, with 4571mg of sodium per serving—more than twice the amount you should be having in a whole day.

Hungry Jacks came a close second with the Whopper Hunger Tamers Meal consisting of two burgers, three chicken nuggets, fries and a medium coke—all intended for one person—containing 7600kJ per serving, or 87 percent of the average adult's daily energy intake in one meal.

Public health lawyer and Research Fellow at The George Institute Dr. Alexandra Jones said that the pursuit of convenience should come with a serious health warning.

"Before lockdown Australians were making over 50 million visits to [fast food](#) chains a month and spending nearly a third of their household food budget on eating out," she said.

"We may now have lost our ability to dine in, but it has never been easier to order fast food from the couch. While we're moving less, fast food companies have been bombarding us on social media with suggestions for 'comfort' eating. This undermines efforts to maintain a [healthy diet](#) for both physical and mental wellbeing."

The report showed that Hungry Jacks was the worst offender in the single burger category. Its Double Angus Smokey BBQ burger provides a whopping 64 percent of daily energy intake and an alarming 87 percent of your daily salt allowance.

Even plant-based burgers were not immune, on average having the highest energy content per serving in the entire burger category at 3097kJ. The plant-based burger with the highest energy content per serving was the Grill'd Beyond Garden Goodness Burger on a gluten-free bun with 4160kJ per serving—almost half a day's worth of energy in the one [burger](#).

Nearly half of the country's large fast food chains could not be included in the analysis because not enough information was available to compare products.

"We found that nutrition information provided by fast food chains isn't always clear or consistent, making it difficult for people to choose wisely. The wide availability and promotion of meal options that contain excess energy are helping to fuel the nation's obesity epidemic," added Dr. Jones.

The news was not good when it came to salt either—out of the 144 combo meals analysed, 60 exceeded suggested dietary targets for sodium, 23 of these were from Red Rooster and 18 from Hungry Jacks.

"High salt intakes are closely linked to high blood pressure which is the leading cause of cardiovascular diseases such as stroke and heart disease. By choosing some of these fast food offerings, people are storing up trouble for their health," she said.

The report also looked at trends between 2016 and 2019, finding that most brands for whom data was available had made little progress in

making healthier product ranges during that time.

"There are clear opportunities for companies to do better, like making healthier versions of products, replacing the less healthy ones with better ones in smaller serving sizes, and displaying complete nutrition information near the point of purchase, to help people make healthier choices," added Dr. Jones.

"In the meantime, our message to consumers is to limit your consumption of fast foods. Take the opportunity of more time at home to brush up on your cooking skills—home cooking from scratch will also have benefits for your health."

More information: FoodSwitch: State of the Fast Food Supply.
[www.georgeinstitute.org/sites/ ... od_supply_report.pdf](http://www.georgeinstitute.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/od_supply_report.pdf)

Provided by George Institute for Global Health

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