GlobalResearch
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# Fast Food Loaded with Antibiotics, Hormones, Heavy Metals, but Few Nutrients

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Global Research, October 27, 2023
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Region: USA
Theme: Biotechnology and GMO



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*Most chain restaurants rely on beef and chicken from concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), where veterinary drugs are routinely used, and of 10 fast food meals sampled and tested, all but two tested positive for veterinary drugs*

*Six of the 10 fast food samples (Taco Bell, Dunkin', Wendy's, Domino's, Burger King and McDonald's) contained a veterinary antibiotic ionophore called monensin, which is not approved for human use as it can cause severe harm*

*Of 43 school lunches tested, 95% had detectable levels of glyphosate, a carcinogenic and endocrine-disrupting weed killer linked to liver inflammation, metabolic disorder, cardiovascular disease and cancer*

*100% of the school lunches tested contained heavy metals at levels up to 6,293 times higher than the maximum levels allowed in drinking water. Cadmium and lead were found at the highest levels*

*Of 21 fast food meals tested for essential minerals, none met the recommended daily requirements of calcium, potassium, manganese, copper, zinc and iron, and none of the 10 fast food meals tested for B vitamins contained detectable levels of B9 or B12. Vitamin B3 (niacin) levels were also exceptionally low*

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While high amounts of linoleic acid (LA) is one of the primary reasons why processed foods and fast food are so bad for your health, contaminants like veterinary drugs, antibiotics, hormones and heavy metals — combined with inferior amounts of essential nutrients — are other highly-ranked reasons to steer clear of.

## 8 of 10 Fast Food Meals Contain Veterinary Drugs

In September 2023, Moms Across America (MAA) submitted food samples from 10 fast food chains to the Health Research Institute, a nonprofit laboratory that tests food for nutrient content, contaminants and toxins. Each food sample was tested for the presence of 104 of the most common veterinary drugs and hormones. You can read the certificate of analysis here.[1]

Fast food restaurants sampled included McDonald's, Starbucks, Subway, Chick-fil-A, Burger King, Taco Bell, Chipotle, Dunkin', Wendy's and Domino's. Of these, only Chipotle and Subway tested negative for veterinary drugs.

This isn't all that surprising, considering most chain restaurants rely on beef and chicken from concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), where veterinary drugs are routinely used. As explained by MAA:[2]

> "Due to large, industry, confined animal feeding operation conditions, which include extremely close quarters, unsanitary spaces, and high incidence of disease, most of America's nonorganic meat comes from livestock that is heavily treated with antibiotics, growth hormones, and an anti-parasitic which is also a known aviary contraceptive."

## 6 of 10 Contain Potentially Risky Antibiotics

Six of the 10 fast food samples (Taco Bell, Dunkin', Wendy's, Domino's, Burger King and McDonald's)[3] contained a veterinary antibiotic ionophore called monensin, which is not approved for human use as it can cause severe harm. The sample with the highest concentration (Taco Bell) contained 0.64 micrograms (mcg). The "acceptable" daily intake is 12.5 mcg/kg of body weight per day.

Monensin also has a number of side effects in animals, including anorexia, diarrhea, depression, ataxia, degeneration of heart and skeletal muscles, necrosis and death.

The antibiotic ionophore narasin, which has the same side effects in animals as monensin, was found in 4 of the 10 samples (Wendy's, Dunkin', Domino's and Starbucks). The highest concentration, 1.53 mcg, was found in a Wendy's cheeseburger. The three others contained only trace concentrations. The "acceptable" daily intake is 5 mcg/kg per day.

Both monensin and narasin are toxic to dogs and horses and can cause paralysis of the hind legs at extremely low levels. They can also cause acute cardiac rhabdomyocyte degeneration and necrosis in beef and dairy cattle. The reason they're used in cattle is because they encourage weight gain. MAA commented on these findings:[4]

> "Moms Across America is gravely concerned about our population, especially children, unknowingly eating unprescribed antibiotic ionophores livestock, even at low levels, consistently because of potential damage to the microbiome as well as the risk of antibiotic-resistant bacteria growth.
>
> We question if the side effects of these ionophores in dogs and horses, leaving their hind legs dysfunctional, might be related to millions of Americans presenting with restless leg syndrome and neuropathy, conditions unknown to most humans just a

> generation or two ago … Until proven safe, we urge our regulatory agencies, such as the USDA and FDA, to disallow the use of these drugs in our livestock."

## 'Fowl Contraceptive' Detected in Chick-fil-A Sandwich

The Chick-fil-A chicken sandwich was found to contain nicarbazin,[5] an antiparasitic drug and fowl contraceptive that causes infertility in certain poultry, such as pigeons and geese. In fact, it's used to control geese and pigeon populations.

In chickens, it's used to control certain types of infections and fatten them up. Side effects of the drug include increased sensitivity to heat stress, degenerative processes in the liver and kidneys, and death.

In 2009, the British Soil Association sought to have nicarbazin banned in the U.K., as evidence proving the drug would not cause genetic damage, mutations, birth deformities or malformations was lacking. As a result, a European review board was unable to establish a safe level of residue in chickens and eggs.[6]

Despite open questions, the European Commission and the UK's Veterinary Medicines Directorate continued to allow routine use of the drug in the poultry industry by using a legal loophole. In the U.S., nicarbazin has been an approved veterinary drug for use as an anticoccidial agent in broiler chickens since 1955.[7]

The Chick-fil-A sandwich contained 0.36 mcg of nicarbazin and the "acceptable" level is 200 mcg/kg per day.[8] The seemingly wide safety margin does not mean there's nothing to worry about though. As noted by MAA executive director Zen Honeycutt:

> "The impact of millions of Americans, especially children and young adults, consuming a known animal contraceptive daily is concerning. With infertility problems on the rise, the reproductive health of this generation is front and center for us, in light of these results.
>
> These are veterinary drugs and hormones … so the only studies that I have found, and that you will find, will be for animals. [They're] not authorized for humans, and yet they're being allowed [into the food supply]. Some people are consuming this food every day, so we don't know how much they are accumulating in their body."

John Fagan, chief scientist at the Health Research Institute, also noted that the FDA's acceptable levels are really only meaningful when we're talking about acute poisoning. In the case of fast food, which some people eat three times a day, the concern is chronic poisoning from the accumulation of toxins over time.[9]

## School Lunches Loaded with Pesticides

In September 2022, MAA also tested 43 school lunches for the presence of not only hormones and veterinary drugs, but also pesticides, heavy metals and nutritional content.[10] The results there were even more concerning.

Ninety-five percent of the school lunch items had detectable levels of glyphosate, a carcinogenic and endocrine-disrupting weed killer routinely used on GMO grains that has been linked to liver inflammation, metabolic disorder, cardiovascular disease and cancer, including liver cancer and Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.[11,12]

The highest levels of glyphosate were found in beef taco with soft wheat tortilla (286.77 nanograms per gram) and pizza (156.14 ng/g). As noted by MAA, these levels are highly concerning:[13]

> "If consumed regularly, results with Total Effective Glyphosate above 25 ng/g could have harmful effects. These are levels that, if routinely fed to rats, cause them to show symptoms of Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD).
>
> NAFLD is life-threatening and is an epidemic in the USA. These levels of glyphosate in school lunches would be expected to have similar effects on children.
>
> Levels lower than 25 ng/g can be expected to contribute to NAFLD and other pathologies because a child will eat more than one thing during the day that contains glyphosate, and the levels of glyphosate would be cumulative."

Other toxic pesticides found in the school meals include:

- **Thiabendazole**, which has immune suppressing effects, was found in 27.9% of the samples.
- **Piperonal butoxide**, present in 18 of the 43 samples (41%), is a developmental toxin that causes birth defects and neurodevelopment disruptions.
- **Pyrimethanil**, detected at 595.04 ppb on an apple, has been shown to cause thyroid tumors in animals.

## School Meals: Drugs, Heavy Metals, but Few Nutrients

Nine of the 43 school lunches also contained four types of veterinary drugs and hormones, and a shocking 100% of meals contained heavy metals at levels up to 6,293 times higher than the maximum levels allowed in drinking water. Levels ranged from 0.5 ppb to 94.4 mcg/kg.

The highest levels of heavy metals were cadmium and lead, found at up to 46.8 mcg/kg (cadmium) and 94.4 mcg/kg (lead). Meanwhile, most of the meals were "abysmally low" in essential nutrients. As reported by the MAA:

> "An advisor has calculated the contribution that the sample food would make to a person's nutritional requirements, assuming that they ate a 4 oz portion (standardly used in nutritional analysis) and assuming that this food contributed ¼ of their nutrition for the day.
>
> 'The nutritional items are consistently very deficient in Copper and are also consistently deficient (but to a lesser extent) in calcium, potassium, and phosphorous. Magnesium, zinc, and manganese are deficient in many of the samples, roughly 50%. The only mineral that is consistently meeting or exceeding requirements is iron. That is good but it is not enough!' …

> Without proper nutrients, our children's brains will not function properly, and their bodies will not be developed as needed. Often children with learning and behavioral issues are deficient in just one or two minerals or vitamins; when those nutrients are added to their diet, their mental, physical, and behavioral issues subside. Even violent behavior is discontinued. Our children must have proper nutrient-dense food."

## Fast Food Cannot Sustain You

After completing the veterinary drug analysis on 10 fast food meals, MAA went on to test 21 fast food brands for essential minerals, and the top 10 brands for B vitamins.

> "The testing was conducted out of concern for America's skyrocketing mental and physical health crisis," Honeycutt writes in her October 18, 2023, report.[14]
>
> "Eighty-five million Americans eat fast food every day. Fast food companies often supply a significant portion of the 30 million school meals served to our children each day.
>
> The quality of the food, including the contamination of agrochemicals and lack of nutrients due to toxic chemical inputs, contributes to our mental and physical health issues. One in five Americans have a mental illness, and 54% of our children have a chronic health issue.
>
> For many impoverished children, school meals are the only food they consume each day. Numerous studies have linked toxins in the food supply and lack of nutrition to conditions such as autism, depression, aggression, suicide, and homicides. This report will ... disclose the mineral, vitamin B, and calorie levels in the top 20 fast food restaurants/ school lunch suppliers."

Based on the micronutrient testing done on school lunches in 2022 (above), you can probably guess what this nutritional testing revealed. The mineral content of the fast food tested did not meet the recommended daily requirements of calcium, potassium, manganese, copper, zinc and iron.

For example, the recommended daily allowance (RDA) of copper is 900 mcg per day, and Chick-fil-A's chicken nuggets contain just 1.4 mcg of copper per gram. To meet the RDA, an adult would need to consume nearly nine servings of nuggets.

Signs of copper deficiency include fatigue, poor concentration and low mood. Also, "children with autism and violent behavior often have an imbalance of copper," Honeycutt writes.

## Fast Food Nearly Devoid of B Vitamins

Even worse, zero amounts of vitamin B9 or B12 were detected in the top 10 fast food samples, and deficiencies in these B vitamins can lead to fatigue, digestive issues, heart problems, nervous system disorders and erratic behavior. Indeed, vitamin B12 (cobalamin) is known as "the energy vitamin." Your body requires it for energy production.

It also plays an important role in neurological function, and deficiency can culminate in a range of mental health symptoms, from irritability and depression to dementia and even psychosis. You can learn more about vitamin B12's role in mental health in this November 6,

2022 article.

Warning signs of B12 deficiency include brain fog, memory lapses, mood swings, apathy, fatigue, muscle weakness and tingling in the extremities. Unfortunately, B12 deficiency may not present itself for several years, so by the time you notice symptoms, you may be quite deficient.

The fact that NONE of the top 10 fast foods contained B12 is rather remarkable when you consider B12-rich foods include beef, seafood, chicken and eggs. Beef and chicken are staples in fast food, yet fast food beef and chicken provide no B12 at all! If that doesn't convince you that fast food meat is nowhere near the same as grass fed organic meat, I don't know what will.

Levels of B3 (niacin) were also abysmal. The RDA for women is 14 mg per day and for men it's 16 mg. To meet that RDA, a woman would need to consume 333 servings of Chick-fil-A chicken sandwiches (at a serving size of 210 grams) and a man would need to eat 380 servings.

Chipotle's carnitas bowl with everything, which had the highest amount of B3, still requires you to eat eight servings if you're a woman and nine servings if you're a man, to meet your RDA of niacin. As reported by MAA:[15]

> "On average, adults would need to consume between 64-73 servings of the top 10 fast foods to get proper vitamin B3 nutrition per day. Alternatively, a portion of liver (pasture-raised, ideally) or a can of tuna (SafeCatch) would supply enough vitamin B3 or niacin for proper nutrition for a day. Clearly, cheap fast food is not as cheap as it seems when one factors in the value of the nutrients provided in the purchase."

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**Notes**

[1, 3] Health Research Institute Certificate of Analysis

[2, 4] Moms Across America October 9, 2023

[5, 7] EPA Nicarbazin

[6] The Poultry Site March 9, 2009

[8] Science Direct, Nicarbazine, Detecting and Controlling Veterinary Drug Residues in Poultry

[9] Zero Hedge October 13, 2023

[10, 13] Moms Across America September 28, 2022

[11] Berkeley Public Health March 1, 2023

[12] Patient Power Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma February 13, 2023

[14, 15] Moms Across America October 18, 2023

*Featured image source*



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