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A Fast-Food-Ometer!

by Danielle Wood

I'm that parent no kid wants to have at their restaurant table. The one who asks the waiter to put her kid's fries on a separate plate, then divvies them out "only when I see you take a few bites of your sandwich". Sure, I'll sneak a couple of slices of pizza on my lunch break, no salad in sight, but when I'm there with my *kid*, I insist we eat some fruit on the side, or some greens, to swarm their way down our esophagus along with all that grease.

In America at least, fast food is simply a way of life. It's all around us. It's cheap. And it's...well... *fast*. Few can resist the siren song of the Frosty or the smell of the freshly tossed deep fryer.

Can fast food be healthy? Probably not. But healthier, according to a new fandangled (and might I mention, *free!*) invention called the CalorieKing. Think of the king as your caloric Jiminy Cricket, ready to steer you away from evil. Except instead of sitting on your shoulder, he's trapped somewhere in your mobile phone. The king has close to 60,000 fast food and chain restaurant items stored in his little brain. And he call tell you which one is worse: the vanilla milkshake, or the double cheeseburger.

Now I know what you're thinking. Won't a little common sense tell me the same thing? You'd be surprised. For example, let's say you're at Wendy's with your hungry child or teen, looking at the menu. Junior is starved and thinking about either:

Meal #1: A roasted turkey and swiss frescata sandwich, a baked potato with sour cream and chives, and a medium Coke.

OR

Meal #2: A five-piece chicken nuggets, a bowl of chili, and a medium Minute Maid lemonade.

What say you, fair parent? Sure, neither is health food, but which one is worse. If you're thinking it's the fried chicken and chili, think again. While both meals have over 20 grams of fat, Meal #2 rings in at 461 calories, compared to a whopping 1,003 for Meal #1. And can you believe it-- the lemonade has just 11 calories, compared to the Coke at 213.

Conclusion: none of us, however busy, should eat this stuff all the time. But if, like me, you find yourself at the occassional fast food joint, get yourself a free copy of this thing. You need an Internet-enabled mobile or smart phone for it to work. But you just might just teach your kid about making healthier choices. And the fact that you're using your cell to do it, might add a little smidge of cool-factor, too!

<http://mobile.calorieking.com>

