NUTRITION CHALLENGE #2:

FAST FOOD WILL PUT YOU ON THE FAST TRACK TO DISEASE!

Your second Nutrition Challenge for our 9-week program is to limit your fast food intake. Try to avoid eating any fast food at all for the next two weeks. If you find yourself in a situation where you have no other choice, substitute a healthier option than a burger, fries and a shake! If you can avoid fast food and/or poor food choices for the next two weeks and increase your fruits, veggies and lean protein intake, please have your parent sign the acknowledgement form and return it to your PE teacher on Friday, March 21st.

Five Fabulous Reasons to Forgo Fast Food
(Adapted from Reasons Eating Junk Food is Not Good by Tracey Roizman, San Francisco Chronicle)

#1 Fast food plays a major role in the obesity epidemic. By the year 2050, the rate of obesity in the U.S. is expected to reach 42 percent, according to researchers at Harvard University. Children who eat fast food as a regular part of their diets consume more fat, carbohydrates and processed sugar and less fiber than those who do not eat fast food regularly. Junk food in these children’s diets accounts for 187 extra calories per day, leading to 6 additional pounds of weight gain per year. Obesity increases your risk for cardiovascular disease, diabetes and many other chronic health conditions.

#2 Your insulin levels become elevated when you eat processed sugars, such as those in soft drinks, white flour and other foods devoid of fiber and nutrients necessary to properly metabolize carbohydrates. Eating junk foods throughout the day causes chronically high insulin levels, which eventually prompts your cells to begin to ignore this important hormone, resulting in a condition known as insulin resistance. Ultimately, obesity and Type 2 diabetes may set in. Since the 1980s, Type 2 diabetes, which used to be minimal in teenagers, has now reached epidemic proportions.

#3. Junk and fast food may lead to depression in teenagers, according to Andrew F. Smith, author of the book "Fast Food and Junk Food: An Encyclopedia of What We Love to Eat." Hormonal changes at puberty make teens more susceptible to mood and behavioral swings. A healthy diet plays a part in keeping hormone levels on an even keel, while a diet high in junk food falls short of these requirements. Consuming trans fats, saturated fats and processed food is associated with up to 58 percent increase in risk of depression.

#4. Processing that removes vitamins, minerals and fiber makes junk foods into the sources of empty calories that nutritionists disparage. Children who eat a lot of fast foods may develop nutritional deficiencies that lead to low energy, mood swings, sleep disturbance and poor academic achievement, among other health conditions, according to the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension.

#5. High sodium levels are a defining characteristic of many fast foods and one of
the contributing factors to the overconsumption of salt that typifies the Western diet and contributes to high blood pressure and heart, liver and kidney diseases, according to Harvard Health Publications. The average American eats five to 10 times more salt than the 2,300 milligrams per day recommended by the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

References

- Harvard University Department of Science and Engineering: Obesity Rate Will Reach at Least 42%
- Children's Hospital Boston: Clear Link Between Fast Food, Obesity
- University of California Santa Barbara: Fast Food Causes Depression, Studies Say
- Fast Food and Junk Food: An Encyclopedia of What We Love to Eat; Andrew F. Smith
- University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension: Children and Obesity: Good Food and Good Moves
- Modern Dietary Fat Intakes in Disease Promotion; Fabien De Meester, Sherma Zibadi and Ronald Ross Watson
- Harvard Health Publications: Salt and Your Health, Part II: Shaking the Habit
- Stony Brook University: The Dangers of Eating Fast Food

Parent Acknowledgement

Your Challenge, if you choose to accept it, is to forgo any fast food for the next two weeks! You can do it!!

If you can successfully remove the junk out of your diet and try to consume more vegetables, fruits and lean proteins - for all the reasons we’ve outlined on this paper - please return this slip signed by your parent or guardian no later than Friday, March 21st.

Student Name: ___________________________________________  Period: _______

As parent/guardian of ________________________________, I confirm that my child has completed Nutrition Challenge #2 as detailed above.

X________________________________________ Phone#: _______________________

(Print name) __________________________________________