

## **The dangers of food**

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Fast food companies had better watch out: they might be sued for endangering your health! A number of American food companies are being sued by their customers, who say the food made them fat and sick. According to these customers, the companies should have warned them this kind of food could be harmful.

About 170.000 American fast food restaurants sell food that is high in fat, sugar and calories. They include potatoes cooked in oil and meat sandwiches called hamburgers. The restaurants also serve soft drinks containing large amounts of sugar, all of which contribute to an unhealthy diet.

One man claimed that he had heart attacks and developed diabetes as a result of eating fast food. Other families say their children got fat on fast food and also developed diabetes. One of these teenagers weighs 180 kilograms.

Experts say Americans are now the fattest people in the world. They say that almost 60% of American adults and 13% of American children weigh too much, and this number is increasing. They warn that the fast food industry, schools and government agencies should change their policies. If not, being overweight could become the nation's leading cause of preventable death.

A report published by the Center for the Public Interest says that Americans spend about half their food budgets on meals eaten outside the home. Many restaurants have increased the size of their servings. And it is difficult to know the amount of fat and nutrients in the food served in restaurants. Processed foods sold in food stores are required to include this information on their labels. The question remains, though: should we blame the fast food industry for making us fat, or ourselves?

**1. Answer the following questions using your own words and based on the ideas taken from the text. (4 points).**

1. What kind of information has to be included in the food packets?
2. How much do Americans spend on fast food?
3. What makes fast food so unhealthy?
4. Why are people angry with food companies?

**2. Are the following statements true or false? Say why. Take evidence even quoting from the text to support your answer. No marks will be given if you write only true or false. (2 points).**

1. Nowadays the number of overweight people is less than a couple of years before.
2. People only get overweight by eating fast food.

**3. Vocabulary. Find in the text synonyms of these words. (0.25 points each, 1 point in total)**

1. avoidable
2. to accuse
3. taken to court
4. treated

**5. Write a composition in English of about 120 words. Choose one of the following topics (3 points)**

1. The kind of meals you enjoy most. Explain which they are and why you like them.
2. Changing eating habits in our society.

## **Answers**

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### **Question 1:**

1. They must show how much fat and nutrients they contain.
2. They spend on it approximately half the money they spend on food.
3. It is unhealthy because it has too much sugar, fat and calories.
4. They think they are sick and overweight because of them. So, in their opinion, these companies should have told them about how unhealthy their food is.

### **Question 2:**

1. False. *They say that almost 60% of American adults and 13% of American children weigh too much, and this number is increasing.*
2. False. *The restaurants also serve soft drinks containing large amounts of sugar, all of which contribute to an unhealthy diet.*

### **Question 3:**

1. preventable
2. to blame
3. sued
4. processed

### **Question 4:**

*This is a sample composition on topic 2.*

#### Changing eating habits in our society

It is obvious that our eating habits have changed quite a lot in the last decade or so. Although the healthy Mediterranean diet is still very present in Spain, we are getting used to eating fast food more and more often.

Nowadays there are lots of fast food restaurants in our country and you can find a large selection of already cooked meals in any supermarket. However, most people know that this sort of food is by far less beneficial than traditional meals cooked at home. Then, why do we seem to eat more and more fast food? The reason is that we don't have enough time to cook a proper meal ourselves. So, we turn to already prepared food we can eat it at anytime.

However, and despite this tendency, Spaniards are probably much more aware than other people about how important eating properly is.