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Beware the fat in the froth

Health coalition calls for menu labelling to sort fat from fiction

Health conscious consumers may be unwittingly ordering energy dense snacks and drinks, which contain up to a quarter of their daily kilojoule intake, due to a lack of clear menu labelling, according to a group of health agencies.

Jane Martin, Senior Policy Adviser for the Obesity Policy Coalition, said that many consumers would be surprised to find that some seemingly innocuous items such as frappes and smoothies contained around a quarter of an adult's recommended daily energy intake. To make matters worse many products with healthy sounding names are at the top of the worst offenders list.

"As consumers are becoming more health conscious, fast food outlets are trying to capitalise on this by heavily promoting foods or drinks as 'healthier options'; however, in many cases these products are equally high in energy as some standard menu items.

"Some of the highest kilojoule menu items have names such as the Blueberry Blast, Garden Goodness and Green Tea Venti. While some of these products contain valuable nutrients, few people would realise that there's less than a 100 kilojoules difference between a Big Mac and the McDonald's Crispy Chicken Caesar Salad.

"Clearer labelling on menus at fast food outlets would help consumers sort the fat from the fiction at a glance. Traffic light labels, whereby foods are colour coded based on whether levels of fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt are high, medium and low, would help people make healthier choices.

"We know there is public support for traffic light labelling on menus – 85% of consumers surveyed by Cancer Council Victoria are in favour of this type of labelling on menu boards at fast food outlets. We've also seen the effect of kilojoule labelling in certain states of America and the decrease in energy consumed as a result. The US is now rolling out menu and vending machine labelling nationally."

"We call on the Federal Government in its food labelling review to adopt improved menu labelling across Australia," said Ms Martin.

10 Takeaway Hidden Fat Offenders

Outlet	Item	Kilojoules*
Starbucks	Green Tea Cream Venti	2363
KFC	Sweet Chilli Cayan Grilled Melt	2352
Nando's	Vege burger + mayo	2270
Grill'd	Garden Goodness Vege Burger + herb mayo	2240
Sumo Salad	Chicken Caesar Salad + dressing	2042
Subway	6-inch Spicy Italian	2120
Boost Juice	Blueberry Blast low fat smoothie	1995

Media release



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McDonalds	Crispy Chicken Caesar Salad with dressing	1974 (Big Mac = 2060)
Gloria Jean's	Large Mango Fruit Chiller	1880
Red Rooster	Skinfree Grilled Chicken Baguette	1850

*The recommended average kilojoules per day for an adult is 8,200.



About the Obesity Policy Coalition

The Obesity Policy Coalition is a group of leading public health agencies who are concerned about the escalating levels of overweight and obesity, particularly in children.

The Obesity Policy Coalition partners include Diabetes Australia - Vic, Cancer Council Victoria, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) and the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Obesity Prevention at Deakin University.

Media release

