

Fast Food: Bad for Your Health

Igee M. Reed

My favorite memory of food is when my mom and dad would cook for me. During my childhood, my parents were on food stamps, but they were able to manage and to provide for my brother and me very well.

Both of my parents were great cooks and we couldn't wait for dinner. They would cook food such as neck bones, chicken rice, carrots, string

I gained a lot of weight because it was easier to go to a fast food restaurant than it was to cook for myself.

beans with chopped onions, soups, and my favorite—butter cheese biscuits. I remember this time very well because it was the time that I ate healthy and nutritious food, which kept me fit.

After my parents passed away, I stopped eating healthy food. I gained a lot of weight because it was easier to go to a fast food restaurant than it was to cook for myself. As a consequence, in 2012, I was diagnosed with Type II diabetes. Both diabetes and obesity are big problems in our society today. This is because there is such easy access to greasy, fattening, and poor quality foods that are much cheaper than healthy foods.

In the last few months, I have been working on changing my bad eating habits by attending nutrition and diabetes groups, which help a lot with understanding healthy food choices. In addition, by eating healthy food and eliminating sugar from my diet, my diabetes is under control. At this point, I am also on food stamps, which allows me to go to local food markets and purchase foods that are healthier than McDonalds and other chain restaurants. With help from my nutritionist and endocrinologist, as well as having access to local food stores (like ShopRite or the farmer's market), I can work on my health issues.



Igee M. Reed is a student at the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK) Adult Education Program in Trenton, NJ. Igee is 32 years old and wants to continue to live a healthy lifestyle. He also wants to get a job and to be successful.

Making Sense of Fast Food

How did fast food affect the author's health? What did he do to regain his health?

Research the history of fast food. How and why did it become so popular?

Read the article by the fast food worker on p. 29. On Youtube, find the 2-minute video, "Faces of the Boston Fast Food Movement." What would it take to turn regular jobs into decent jobs? For more on this topic, see Issue #36 of *The Change Agent*, "Good Jobs, Not Just Any Jobs."

Do you eat fast food? Why or why not? Go to <www.acaloriecounter.com/fast-food.php> to look up nutrition information about fast food so you can make more informed decisions.