The Most Unhealthy Meals You Can Eat While Dining Out in 2016

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Nutrition studies have long shown that eating out instead of cooking at home can seriously boost the calories, sodium and portion sizes of the meals we eat. To help combat this issue, the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) releases an annual list of the least healthy items you can order at U.S. chain restaurants. A recent report from NBC Chicago checked out this year's winners of the Xtreme Eating awards, and the results are pretty shocking.

According to CSPI experts, nine menu items made the list of the all-time worst things to choose at a restaurant when watching your waistline. This year's study specifically points to the growing trend of "combo dishes" that can multiply fat and calorie counts by sandwiching unhealthy options together into a so-called single serving. According to nutrition experts, this year's winner (the Whole Hog hamburger offered at Uno Pizzeria & Grill) managed to pack one day's worth of calories, three days' worth of saturated fat and six days worth of sodium into one meal.

Other notable dietary catastrophes included a new take on fried chicken and waffles offered at the Cheesecake Factory that packs a full 86 grams of saturated fat, an Applebee's appetizer sampler platter containing 11,650 mg of sodium and a slushy drink offered at Sonic that somehow packed a full 1¼ cups of sugar into a single 16-ounce serving.

"The 3,000-calorie burger platters of today make McDonald's Quarter Pounders look like sliders," said CSPI's official dietitian Lindsay Moyer, MS, RDN in comments about this year's list. "[Today,] America's restaurant chains are serving up meals that seem engineered to promote diabetes, obesity, heart disease and strokes."

But the organization also offered some tips on ordering smart when eating at big chain restaurants in the United States, including choosing meals from the "light" menu when available, skipping the appetizers and bringing home half of your meal as leftovers for the following day.

To read the CSPI's full list, click here. Then click here for an amazing seven-day, no-cooking, inexpensive and delicious meal plan to fit your nutrition needs.

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