

How many of you have eaten out at a restaurant? What about a fast food place; for example, McDonald's or Burger King? Maybe KFC or Taco Bell? Or, quite possibly, all of the four I just mentioned? During the summer, you might make a visit with that juicy burger very often. In 2006, the average amount of hamburgers Americans ate over the course of one year was 13 billion. If you put all those burgers in a straight line, it could circle the earth more than 32 times. That's a lot of burgers. But do you know what happens behind the counter?

For some, this may be shocking, but I hope you'll stay with me on this, since it is important, not only for you, but others as well. Many of the popular fast food companies in America take part in the cruelty of animals, cruelty of the workforce, and ignorance of a customer's health.

First, the slaughterhouse is a horrifying death for animals who are unlucky enough to meet it.

Second, employees in slaughterhouses work in some of the most fatal conditions.

Third, by not supporting the fast food industry, you are improving your health.

Many big corporations say that they don't have enough money to make slaughterhouses nicer places for employees and animals.

Why would a multibillion-dollar corporation not have enough money just to give a little more to their hardworking employees and to buy new tools to make the employees' jobs safer, plus the animals put down much more peacefully than heartbreakingly?

In the book *Chew On This* by Eric Schlosser and Charles Wilson, they talk about what happens to the animals in the slaughterhouse. They discuss alternatives that these corporations can follow. They said that in the UK to put chickens down, all the chickens are herded into a room and gas is released which slowly and painlessly puts the chickens down. In the US companies argue that they don't have enough money so they can't afford to buy that kind of technology, and have to resort to the older, cheaper way, which is cruel to the animals and quite disturbing to think about when you look at your chicken nugget.

In American slaughterhouses, employees grab the chicken by the legs and shackle them to a conveyor belt, where they are then dunked in electrified water. Some are knocked unconscious by the bath. The ones that aren't knocked out at the shock bath, have to go through very painful death. They either end up getting their heads cut off, or they get boiled to death in the big vat of boiling water that is meant to de-feather the birds. And that's just the chickens.

Slaughtering these animals is a messy job, and with so many machines and people working together, many injuries happen. Injuries in the workplaces have to be reported to OSHA, the Occupational Safety and Health Association. And the meat-packing industry file is home to some incredibly disturbing titles. Some include: Employee's Eye

Injured When Struck by Hanging Hook, Employee Killed When Head Crushed by Conveyer, and Employee Hospitalized for Neck Laceration from Flying Blade.
One of the biggest reasons now, is your health.

Did you know that from eating too much of fast food junk you can develop type 2 diabetes? A kid at the age of ten with type 2 diabetes can expect 10-17 years of their life gone. Plus, teens who eat a lot of fast food died from heart attacks, while they are still in their teenage years.

Fast food companies think of their consumers mostly as people who give them money, so therefore they don't put as much care as they should in your food. Breakouts of E Coli, a fatal type of food poisoning, in fast food hamburger meat have been recorded. And the USDA once admitted, I quote "We can fine circuses for mistreating elephants, but we can't fine companies that violate food-safety standards."

As we observed earlier, fast food companies don't care much for the animals they put in their food. One hamburger can contain meat from hundreds of different cows! By avoiding such precarious food you can help yourself stay healthy and fit. You can better your life by resisting the urge of fast food. Try to think about what I have told you the next time you look at that juicy hamburger or those crunchy McNuggets.

Thank you.