

## CONSUMPTION & PERCEPTIONS OF FAST FOOD A TEEN PERSPECTIVE

**A look at Canadian teens' perceptions, preferences and consumption of fast food.**

Fast, cheap calories still rule when it comes to teens. While they may be making wiser, healthier decisions when it comes to their consumption, teens still turn to tried and true fast food to fill their empty stomachs. With 30% of teens claiming that fast food is their preferred type of food and 80% eating fast food at least once a week, teens are a lucrative segment of the market for fast food brands. This report examines the what, where, why and when of teens and fast food.

**“You can say all you want that fast food is bad. We all eat it. It’s part of our lifestyle.”**

**-Teen Respondent**

### What is your favorite kind of fast food?

Hamburgers/Fries



Subs/Sandwiches



Asian (Express Chinese, Vietnamese, or Japanese food)



Pizza



Fried Chicken (Fried Chicken, chicken burgers, etc)



Mexican (Tacos, burritos, etc)



Nexopia Survey n=779

### THE DOWN AND DIRTY FACTS ABOUT TEENS & FAST FOOD:

Where	What	When	Why	How Much
<i>Are very ritualistic &amp; loyal with their fast food consumption.</i>	<i>Prefer healthy options, but aren't above the grease.</i>	<i>Are frequent fast food eaters.</i>	<i>Fits their hustle bustle lifestyle.</i>	<i>Use a chunk of their disposable income on fast food purchases.</i>
66% go to the same fast food place & order the same thing every time Sub/sandwich & traditional fast food brands rank the highest on the teen preferred list	59% eat greasy sometimes, and other times healthier fast food 23% pick the healthiest option on the menu most of the time, while 18% always go for the grease	80% eat fast food at least once a week, 38% eat it more than once a week Supper consumption (32%) is slightly higher than lunch consumption (29%) demonstrating they tend to 'fend for themselves' when it comes to dinner plans.	Convenience is the number 1 reason teens turn to fast food to fill their empty bellies 63% eat it because it's convenient & fast, while only 17% choose fast food because it's satisfying	73% spend 15% or less on of their spending money on fast food, while 22% spend almost half of their spending money on fast food 57% spend an average of \$10 or less per week 15% spend an average of \$20 or more week



“You can eat fast food and be healthy- it’s not impossible. You just have to choose right.”

-Teen Respondent

#### How often do you eat fast food?

A few times per month



Once a week



A few times a year



Every few days



Almost every day



Never



Nexopia Survey n=779

#### Favorite Place to Eat Fast Food



Nexopia Survey n=779

## LEARNINGS, STRATEGIES, & IMPLICATIONS:

### Balance the good and the grease.

While they are not above giving into their tried and true greasy favorites, they more often look for healthier menu options. Ensure your menus have a strong balance of traditional grease and healthy options. Introduce new, healthy options on a seasonal basis to surprise teens, refresh your brand perceptions, and give them the options they are looking for.

### Reward them.

Teens are loyal, regular customers. They spend a significant portion of their disposable income on fast food, so reward them by implementing loyalty programs. Typically, industries with high purchase frequency and stiff competition adopt loyalty programs- but few fast food restaurants have caught on. Implementing loyalty programs not only helps to set the brand apart, it can increase the likelihood of repeat customers and potentially drive frequency of visits.

### Be where they are.

Teens are on the go at all times & are always looking for convenience and speed. Consider opening mobile restaurants (similar to street vendor style) that frequent high teen pedestrian traffic areas- near schools, malls, at sporting events, etc, to catch them when they are on the go.

### Be visible, be different.

Teens are ritualistic in their fast food consumption- going to the same places, ordering the same thing. In order to break them out of their fast food rut, you need to be visible & impactful. Disrupt their routine with highly engaging, nontraditional communication and get noticed.

#### About the survey

Results are based on a survey launched in August 2009 (n= 779) and homepage polls with a sample size averaging n= 3,000: Key demographics: 42.6% male, 57.4% female 76% aged 13-18, 11% aged 19-23

#### Want more?

Nexopia is the leading Canadian social networking site for youth. We reach into the minds of young people- tapping into their attitudes and values, lifestyles and trends, media, products and brands. Our exploratory research includes quantitative surveys and in-depth qualitative research (focus groups, observation, teen panels). These reports are distributed to key Canadian advertising and marketing decision makers with the intent to demystify this niche market and assist with developing relevant and effective communication & marketing strategies.

KELLEY HAJAR

email: [kelley@connect13.ca](mailto:kelley@connect13.ca)

direct: 780 444 1250 ext.200

**Connect13.ca**

Prepared by: Brand Consultant- Darla Miazdyck

email: [darla.miazdyck@gmail.com](mailto:darla.miazdyck@gmail.com)

804 212 6724 - 647 347 3133