

NANA Wants Your Fries

By ACSH Staff — June 24, 2002

Where would you expect to hear that paying less and getting more is a bad thing? Only in the often-bizarre world of "public-health" activism.

Yes, according to NANA (the National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity), fast-food vendors are robbing you blind by giving you more for less. You can read their report about the cost and calories found in various fast foods at their parent organization's website (http://www.cspinet.org/new/waistline_061802.html ^[1]).

Among the horrifying findings:

A large order of McDonald's fries cost 62% more than the small but included 157% more calories.

A Starbucks venti caffe latte with whole milk cost only 35% more but had 67% more calories.

A Classic Cinnabon costs 24% more than the Minibon but has twice as many calories and three times the fat.

NANA argues that customers are getting a raw deal on super-sizing because larger portions and higher fat or calorie counts promote overeating and weight gain. But NANA's analysis comes up short in a few ways. For example, they fail to consider the benefits of consumer choice, the potential monetary savings from portion sharing, and the potential to obviate health-harms via exercise. One glaring example of unbalanced analysis is NANA's attack on super-size sodas, which conveniently ignores the fact that diet soda consumers get the same volume discounts.

Here's another view of the same three values that NANA finds so appalling:

A large order of fries at McDonald's cost 62 percent more than the smaller version but gets you 91% more fries.

A Starbucks venti caffe latte with whole milk cost only 35% more but gives you 67% more to drink.

A Classic Cinnabon cinnamon roll costs 24% more than the Minibon but is 67% bigger.

Though NANA tut-tuts over super-sizing, most consumers would probably like to see more of it. Imagine paying only 50% more money for 300% more gasoline. And rather than hearing that they are getting less and less medical care for ever-higher premiums, most consumers would probably welcome a note saying that the newest 10% hike in premiums will get them 50% more benefits.

Another interesting question is why consumers don't get these kinds of benefits in the types of nanny-state governmental "services" that groups like NANA tend to advocate. For example, when was the last time the post office said they were raising your rates 10%, but giving you 100% more of the specific services you just went in to buy? When did the federal government last explain a tax

hike by saying, "Yes, but for only 2% more taxes you will personally receive 50% more of your favorite individualized government services"?

I'd like to super-size my house, please.

Kenneth Green, D.Env., is Chief Scientist for the free-market Reason Public Policy Institute (www.rppi.org ^[2]), which is part of the Reason Foundation, and he can be reached at: kenneth.green-at-reason.org

COPYRIGHT © 1978-2016 BY THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON SCIENCE AND HEALTH

Source URL: <https://www.acsh.org/news/2002/06/24/nana-wants-your-fries>

Links

[1] http://www.cspinet.org/new/waistline_061802.html

[2] <http://www.rppi.org>