



fooled by *fast food*

Almost 60 per cent of Australians and more than half of New Zealanders are now overweight or obese. A recent health study published in *Obesity Reviews* gives a clue as to why fast foods may be one of the key culprits for the rising rates.

passive overconsumption

Modern fast food undermines your normal appetite control systems.

The research revealed that humans have a weak innate ability to recognise foods that are concentrated in calories and compensate by eating smaller portions of these foods in order to keep body weight stable. So while you may eat what you consider a normal amount of food, if it's fast food, it may contain up to two-and-a-half times the calories! This is enough, if eaten on a regular basis, for you to unknowingly start piling on weight despite not eating a huge amount.

Fast foods are concentrated in calories due to the hidden fat and sugar.

healthy restraint

While at least one fast-food chain now also offers a "lighter" menu, most options are still too high in calories for regular consumption.

My advice is to avoid fast food altogether; don't allow it to become a regular part of your diet, even monthly. If you choose to eat fast food, then halve your usual amount! Share what you would normally have with a friend. At least this way, you are going into damage control.

Children and teenagers may be the most vulnerable, since they have not yet developed healthy dietary restraint techniques needed by anyone wishing to remain lean in our society of heavyweights.

See **page 49** for a healthy "fast" food recipe.