

**MEDICAL**

**BORN** from 3

While completing the required training at MCG, Vallecilla befriended and worked with current Harbin Clinic gynecologist Dr. Margaret Thompson.

After completing her second residency, Vallecilla worked as an assistant professor and attending physician at MCG.

"You can learn a lot just by teaching," Vallecilla said. "I'm grateful to have had that opportunity, but I'm looking forward to serving the Rome

community." Vallecilla will move to Rome at the end of August, along with her husband and two sons.

"We've fallen in love with the city," Vallecilla said. "I like the small town vibe. It's a great place to raise a family."

**COWAN** from 2

"(This minimally invasive surgery) provides a level of accuracy and comfort that larger incisions do not," Cowan said.

Cowan will also perform bi-

opsies and work with patients suffering from head or spine trauma.

Cowan joins Dr. Carl Her- ring as the second neurosur- geon in Harbin Clinic's neu- rosience division. His addi- tion to the staff will mean that less people will have to leave the area to receive surgery.

"It's hard for neurosurgeons to practice in isolation. We need (doctors) to work in a collaborative fashion," Cowan said. "Harbin Clinic provides quality care by provid- ing comprehensive care. There are no communication barriers between physi- cians."

# Fast food nation

Dietician answers questions about drive-thru meals

By Karissa Stewart  
Rome News-Tribune  
KStewart@RN-T.com / 706-290-5271

Hidden calories and fat is something you should examine when eating fast food, but what else should consumers take into consideration when they are trying to eat healthy at fast food restaurants?

What kinds of things are important to ask?

Working with doctors and nurses, Kristin Dickhoner, a dietician at Harbin Clinic, specializing in diabetes management and weight loss, tells her patients to find the balance, avoid extra add-ons, and eat out three times a week max.

"You aren't going to find a healthy choice, but find the best choice," said Dickhoner. "Find a compromise."

This compromise involves, removing croutons, a low fat dressing, and sometimes eating half of the portions served.

"Water or a diet drink is a healthier side item to balance it out," she said.

Like most people, we have the idea that when we pull up to a fast food restaurant or go inside we will choose what is most healthy.

We won't, according to Dickhoner. Planning must take place before we enter a drive-thru or step inside a restaurant. "Look at nutrition information before you're hungry and choose what you will eat before you are hungry—and the tempting smells grab you," she said.

"You will be satisfied with your choice and you won't be as tempted."

Other tips include: Avoid super-sizing and heavy sauces, choose a healthy side, fat free sour cream, low carbs, and do go out to eat.

"It's a social activity and breaks up the week a little bit," she said. "Learn to control the environment, but don't deprive yourself of the activity."

Below, Dickhoner answers a few common questions.

**Fast food Q&A**

**Q:** Why do we still feel hungry after we eat an enormous value meal?

**A:** All foods are digested differently. You may feel hungry sooner if you have had a lot of bread and did not get the right mixture of other types of foods.



Brittany Hannah / Rome News-Tribune

Larry Kennedy bites into a burger at McDonalds on Shorter Avenue.

**Q:** Are carbs as important as everyone says?

**A:** No-carb and low-carb diets aren't the best thing for us. Carbs are important and we definitely need them in our diet. Our body is designed for these things. If you are getting too much it will add weight. Look for more refined carbs and starchy items. Carbs are not bad, carbs are not evil, and it's all about moderation.

**Q:** Does fast food provide our bodies with enough nutrients?

**A:** No. Fast food is cooked fast and it is not the highest quality, and there is not a lot of variety.

We need variety in our diet, we need high quality food, and if our diet is dependent on fast food then we aren't getting all the nutrients. We are limited when we eat fast food.

**Q:** What is the proper size or amount of foods we should eat?

**A:** It depends on the individual and everyone is totally different. It's not even based on weight or height. It varies so much person to person. Discuss this with your physician or ask a health care provider what is best for you.

Please see FOOD 6



Jeff Gable / Rome News-Tribune

Janet Childre, the Clinical Nutrition Manager at Floyd Medical Center, uses plastic food models to demonstrate healthy eating and portion sizes to patients.

**LOSS** from 2

All the experts agree that before starting any type of serious diet or exercise program, you should consult with medical professionals if you have any questions.

"There are a lot of resources out there, from the American Dietetic Association to the USDA Web site (www.mypyramid.gov) to the Dairy Council," Childre said. "You can get a lot of information that way, and that always helps. People need to know that (losing weight) isn't magic, it's a lifetime change."

And making those healthy changes is ultimately the key to long-term success.

"We preach a balanced diet and patience,

*'It's a gradual process, like anything else. A safe weight loss is about one to three pounds a week ...'*

**Leigh Crews**  
certified personal trainer



because weight loss isn't going to be instant," Knight said. "But most of the time, if people stick to it and make up their mind, they can do it. And getting into good, healthy habits is the best way to start."

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