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Billions served but Cleveland Clinic says no thanks to McDonald's

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After 20 years of serving patients, visitors, and Clinic employees in Cleveland, Ohio, the restaurant's last day will be September 18. The world renowned hospital is not renewing its contract with McDonald's.

"As a part of Cleveland Clinic's commitment to health and wellness, we have made a number of changes across our health system over the past ten years that promote healthy food choices, exercise, and a smoke free environment," said Eileen Sheil, the Clinic's executive director for corporate communications, explaining why McDonald's had to go. "Our goal is to reduce the risk factors that contribute significantly to chronic diseases."

Hospital officials have talked about banning McDonald's for at least a dozen years, as part of their growing interest in promoting—and practicing—healthy life styles. In 2007, the hospital system stopped hiring people who smoke.

In 2011, the American Hospital Association, which represents about 5000 hospitals, issued "[A Call to Action: Creating a Culture of Health](#)." Its top recommendation declared: "As part of fulfilling their mission, hospitals are beacons of trust in the community. Hospitals must create robust health and wellness programs as examples to the communities that they serve." Another of the report's

recommendations suggested that hospitals "remove environmental inconsistencies, such as unhealthy foods at meetings, in vending machines, or in the cafeteria."

The Clinic becomes the seventh US hospital to shut down its McDonald's, following hospitals in Texas, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Kansas, and Indiana, said Sriram Madhusoodanan, who directs the "Value [The] Meal" project at Corporate Accountability International, a watchdog group based in Boston that has urged hospitals to get rid of fast food, particularly from McDonald's.

A hospital that allows McDonald's to operate within its facility is providing "a tacit endorsement" of the restaurant's "junk food," he said. The introduction of salads, egg white breakfasts, sandwich wraps, and other menu options is just an effort to deflect criticism, he added.

McDonald's has a quite different view: "You told us you're trying harder to be more nutrition-minded for yourself and for your family," the company's nutrition [website](#) says. "That's why we have been accelerating our efforts to serve food you feel better about eating and to help you make informed nutrition choices...We're committed to giving you more delicious choices to feel good about now and in the months and years to come."

