

# Family claims rat found in hamburger

McDonald's meal  
traumatized girl,  
lawsuit says

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A Toronto family has filed a \$17.5 million lawsuit against McDonald's after a 9-year-old girl allegedly bit into a burger that contained a crushed rat's head.

The family's suit against McDonald's Restaurants of Canada Ltd., McDonald's Corp. and senior company officials stems from an incident they claim happened in June, 1999, at 2625 Weston Rd., just south of the 401.

Ayan Abdi Jama was sickened after finding the Big Mac she was eating contained the severed head of a rat, "complete with eyes, teeth, nose and whiskers," says a statement of claim filed in court.

"As a consequence of this event," the claim reads, "Ayan alleges that she suffered physical injury and has suffered, and is continuing to suffer, extensive psychiatric damages."

The allegations have not been proved in court.

When contacted by The Star, Ronald G. Slaght, the lawyer representing McDonald's Corp. and two senior company officials, refused comment on the case.

The lawyer representing McDonald's Restaurants of Canada, two other senior com-

pany officials and a restaurant assistant manager, could not be reached for comment.

"I haven't heard about it," said the restaurant's night manager who would not give his name last night. "We got our green pass from the (Toronto) health department. You can see it's posted."

Yesterday, a judge dismissed the claim against senior company officers and McDonald's Corp. Claims remain against McDonald's Restaurants of Canada and an assistant manager at the restaurant.

"It's safe to say that in Canada, this case is unprecedented," said the family's lawyer, Ted Charney.

Taking a bite, the girl "noticed a black object embedded in one of the meat patties," the claim says. "She opened the sandwich and observed a long, black, hairy object."

She was "extremely distraught and emotionally upset . . . extremely nauseated and was vomiting."

The girl has been diagnosed as suffering from separation anxiety disorder, "features of post-traumatic stress disorder" and "acute adjustment disorder with mixed anxiety and depressed mood," the claim says.

"Her life has been irrevocably changed," the claim says.

After the discovery, assistant manager Heath Miller "attempted to confiscate the sandwich," the claim says. But the girl's mother, Noora Mohammad, kept it and later had it tested, the claim states.

2001