

Session Eight: Healthy Fast Food

Americans are spending HALF of their food dollars on meals purchased outside of the home. This fact makes the art of making healthy fast food choices a necessary survival skill in order for you to stay within your calorie guidelines and five percent of your recommended percentages of protein, carbohydrate and fat. With the popularity of fast food and the number of new restaurants on the rise, there are more food choices than ever. But you still need information about food other than what is on the menu.

The term “*Fast Food*” is commonly associated with hamburgers, greasy french fries, and cola. However, popular family restaurant menu items can be ordered “*to go*” without waiting for their preparation or standing in a long line. You can even pay with a credit card over the phone if you’re in a real hurry. Overall, fast food does not have to be high-calorie and high-fat food.

May I take your order, please?

What you order is the key. It's very easy to eat an entire day's worth of fat, salt, and calories in just one fast food meal. But it's also possible to make wise choices and eat a fairly healthy meal.

Tips to help you choose well

- Know that an average fast-food meal can run as high as 1800 calories or more
- Know the nutritional value of the foods you order. Sometimes “good choices”, are higher in the nutrients or calories. Fat-free or Low-Fat items may have plenty of sugar or salt.
- If you're having fast-food for one meal, make all the other meals that day contain the right portion of lean protein, starchy carb and fibrous carb.
- Know your food is cooked. Chicken and fish can be good choices - but not if they are breaded and deep fried.
- Avoid jumbo, giant, deluxe, biggie-sized or super-sized. Larger portions mean more calories, fat, cholesterol, sugar and salt.

When Dining Out

Tempting menus, extra large portions and festive atmospheres make it easy to overlook supportive eating. Splurging once in awhile is okay, but you'll begin to pack on pounds if you make it a habit. It is possible to enjoy yourself and still make supportive choices. Following a few simple rules when eating out can make it possible to maintain your nutrition plan.

1. **Order food to go** – Studies show that people tend to consume more food when they are not eating at their own kitchen tables. Take home and have the option of providing a healthier side dish such as fruit or vegetables.
2. **KNOW** where you will go and what you will eat ahead of time
3. **EAT before you GO**
4. **Avoid buffets** – They are invitations to **OVEREATING**
5. **CHOOSE Wisely** - use the guidelines of Supportive Menu Design
6. **Avoid the BREAD Basket**
7. **ASK how food is prepared** – ask for baked, broiled, roasted, poached or steamed

8. **Don't be afraid to special order** – Ask for your vegetables and main dishes to be served without the sauces.
9. **Watch portion size** – Servings can be 3-5 times more than what you need.
10. **Share** –Sample what you want while avoiding the temptation to overindulge.
11. **WATER** - Drink at least one full-glass of water before eating. You'll feel full sooner, you will eat less.
12. **Order an appetizer** and a salad as your meal.
13. **Front Load** your meal with a nutritious salad or bowl of soup to take the edge off your appetite
14. **Order sauce and dressing on the side** –Control calories and enjoy the taste
15. **Order first.** You're less likely to be influenced by the choices of your companions
16. **Take the time to enjoy your meal.** Savor the flavors and textures of your food, and enjoy the company you're with. When you eat slowly, you give your body's internal clock the time it needs to know when you've had enough. When you're full, stop eating.
17. **Save dessert for later** – A great trick to play is instead of ordering dessert at a restaurant, go somewhere else. By the time you get there, you will not be as hungry and will end up eating half or even skipping dessert entirely.

You can dine out on occasion while remaining true to your goals. The key is to plan ahead, choose wisely and you'll find foods that fit into your meal plan.

Slip-ups

Sometimes we slip up. We overeat or pick less healthy foods because they sound good, we're stressed, or we just feel like it. Supportive eating is a lifelong goal. If one meal isn't healthy, make sure the next one is. If you overdo it one day, put 100% effort into the following day. And don't forget to work in exercise to make up for those extra calories.

REMEMBER: Supportive Nutrition is not all or nothing; it's about balance and moderation.
"It isn't one food, one day, that will make you fat. Just remember, it all adds up."

Complete....

1. How often do you eat Fast Food? How much do you spend per day/week/month?
(I don't know is not an answer.)
2. What modifications do you make or can you make to your order?
3. What do you typically order?
4. Use the following links to find out the nutrition values of the meals you eat out. Be sure to record total calories, fat, sugar and sodium for each item/meal. Also take note of ingredients when listed.

BURGER KING <http://www.burgerking.com/Food/Nutrition/downloads/nutritionals.pdf> The Whopper JR or Hamburger both have 310 calories and 13 grams of fat. The Chicken Whopper has 410 calories and 7 grams of fat. Avoid the Ranch and Zesty Onion dip at all cost...15 grams of fat per serving.

Chick-Fil-A <http://www.chick-fil-a.com/MenuTable.asp?Category=specialties> Chick-fil-a makes it easy to understand what is in each food item. Their nutrition facts can be read as if you are looking at a food label...look at the % RDA. A plus for chick-fil-a, you can now swap out the fries for fresh fruit--yeah somebody gets it!

HARDEES www.hardees.com/lowcarb.pdf Beware of Hardees new low carb items, although low in carbs, the fat content in the low carb thickburger(lettuce burger), the low carb chicken club have a n amazing 24-50 grams of fat. www.hardees.com/nutrition/

KFC http://www.yum.com/nutrition/menu.asp?brandID_Abbr=2_KFC Get the skinny on Kentucky Fried Chicken's Menu items. One of there better looking meals is the Oven Roasted Strips Meal: 3 Oven Roasted Strips, Green Beans, Seasoned Rice. Only 7 grams of total fat, but be careful this meal is loaded with 100% of your daily recommended intake of Sodium.

McDonalds http://www.mcdonalds.com/app_controller.nutrition.categories.nutrition.index.html

Starbucks http://www.starbucks.com/retail/nutrition_info.asp Beware of any beverage that contains the words 'crème' or whip those words equate to high fat and 100-200 more calories per 16oz drink. Topping that list is the Strawberries and Crème' Frap Grande(16oz) with whip at 580 calories and 17g of fat or the White Hot Chocolate with whip at 580 calories and 28g of fat.

Taco Bell www.tacobell.com/nutrition.htm Total fat calories for two regular beef tacos with a regular side of nachos and cheese is a whopping 39 grams of fat. Your daily recommended is typically 68 grams or less.

WENDY's www.wendys.com/food/index.jsp?country=US&lang=EN Think twice about ordering the Homestyle Chicken Strip Salad, it has 22 grams of fat without the dressing, add 1 packet of ranch dressing and pack a total of 45 grams of fat into one sitting.

PANERA BREAD <http://panerabread.com/menu/> OR <http://panerabread.com/pdf/nutr-guide.pdf> Panera Bread's delicious sandwiches range between 590 – 1100 calories...saturated fat is between 11 and 56 grams.....this not including your choice of side.