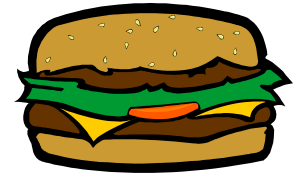


EATING FAST. EATING SENSIBLY



Let's face it; fast food is a part of our culture and our busy lifestyle. It is convenient, affordable, and, even if we sometimes don't want to admit it, delicious!

Consider that:

- Americans spend more on fast food than on movies, books, magazines, newspapers, videos and recorded music—combined!
- In 2000 the typical American ate about 30 pounds of French fries and drank 56 gallons of soda.
- Every month about 90% of American children between the ages of 3 and 9 visit a McDonald's.
- A survey of American school children found that 96% knew who Ronald McDonald was (only Santa Claus is more familiar!)*

*Source: *Fast Food Nation*, Eric Schlosser, 2001.



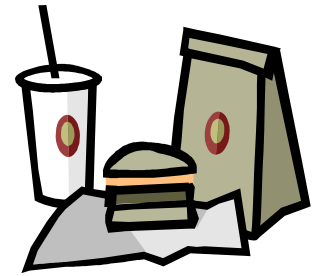
Should I Feel Guilty for Eating Fast Foods?

No! You might think that the words “fast food” and “nutrition” don't belong in the same sentence, but fast foods can be a source of good nutrition if you know how to make proper choices. Fast food is cheaper than eating out at other restaurants (although it often costs more than home-prepared meals), and occasional fast food meals should not be a problem, unless you

have to closely watch your sodium or cholesterol.

However, it is easy to fall into a trap of eating too much fast food. If you find yourself eating fast food more than one to two times per week, you may wish to focus more on healthy menu choices or consider limiting your visits.

Tips on Selecting Foods



BURGER PLACES

Look for grilled burgers and hold the mayo. Go light on the cheese. Watch the French fry intake and go easy on the milkshakes. Salad bars are great, but go easy on the dressings.

Healthy Choices: Grilled chicken sandwiches, side salads, baked potato, soup or chili.

MEXICAN

Chicken and bean burritos, soft tacos, and tostados are good choices. Try extra salsa instead of guacamole and sour cream. Watch the chip intake with your salsa.

Healthy Choices: Salsa, baked tortilla chips, Spanish rice, fajitas, chicken tacos made with flour or corn, refried beans without lard.



CHINESE

Choose stir-fried and steamed dishes with plenty of vegetables. Avoid deep-fried items (egg-rolls and wantons), and high-fat foods such as sweet and sour pork or shrimp.

Healthy Choices: Steamed rice, chicken chow mein, chicken or beef chop suey, steamed Chinese vegetables, vegetable stir-fry.

ITALIAN

Pasta with marinara sauce is a good choice, but watch the alfredo and pesto sauces. Thick-crust pizza, plain or with vegetables, is also a good choice. Choose salads with dressing on the side. Bread is also great, but limit the butter, margarine, or olive oil.

Healthy Choices: Pasta with marinara, tomato sauce, red clam sauce, chicken marsala, spinach or mushroom tortellini, minestrone soup, bread sticks.



Children and Fast Food: What should Parents Do?

Nutrition experts say that there is nothing wrong with children eating an occasional fast food meal as long as less nutritious foods aren't regularly replacing healthy ones. Most children love fast foods and much of the industry's advertising is directly aimed at them. Parents should explain that businesses advertise to sell their products, not to promote good nutrition. Teach your children that, when it is eaten from time to time, fast food has a place in a healthy diet, but also that a variety of different foods

are needed to feel healthy. Finally, model good eating. You will help your child to make nutritious choices if you select healthy items yourself, and little things do not go unnoticed. At a fast food place, this could mean selecting a grilled chicken breast instead of a fried one, or milk instead of soda.



Rules of Thumb



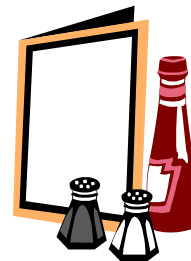
Many fast foods are high in fat, sodium, and calories and relatively low in carbohydrate, micronutrients, and fiber. Which ones are the worst? For starters, **coated or deep-fried foods** will often be high in fat. A food fried in batter or bread crumbs soaks up fat. This is why **grilled or baked is better**. A fried chicken sandwich, for example, has more sodium and 50% more fat than one that is grilled. Also, grilled burgers can be quite lean, but a burger fried on a griddle will have a lot more fat.

Here are some other ideas for fitting fast food into a balanced, healthy diet:

- Choose a side salad or a baked potato to go with your sandwich instead of french fries.
- If you are eating fried chicken, remove the layer of breaded skin. That is where lot of the food's fat and salt come from.
- Order smaller fries or drinks (better yet, choose juice or milk to drink)
- Order your burger or sandwich without sauce. Mayo, sour cream, and some salad dressings can raise the fat content of meals by a lot!

Words on the Menu

Often times, certain words can clue you into whether a food is “nutrition-wise.”



The following words usually suggest high fat, sodium or calories:

- Fried, crispy, breaded, scampi-style, creamy, buttery, au gratin, or gravy.

These words signal a wise choice:

- Boiled, broiled, tomato sauce, marinara, in its own juice, poached, or charbroiled.

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The Choice Is Yours



Perhaps the best thing you can do to provide your body with proper nutrition is to **eat more vegetables**. Most fast food places give you this option, so you don't have to eat high calorie, high fat foods at fast food restaurants if you don't want to. Next time you are waiting in line, look at the menu and think about the healthy decisions you could make to improve your diet.