

Fast Food On the Go: Your Guide to Eating on the Run and Making Healthy Choices

Introduction:

Does your lifestyle often leave little time for preparing fresh, healthy meals at home? Are you always on the run and looking for a quick fix for meals? Learn how to make fast food healthy in today's hectic lifestyle! Also, learn how fast food and its nutritional components have many effects on the body and the growing epidemic of obesity.

Topic of the Month:

This month's topic is, "Fast Food On the Go"- learn how to make dining out and fast food meals healthy in today's busy lifestyle. In the past, fast food used to mean fried food and hamburgers, but today food franchises are offering people more health-oriented alternatives than ever before. Why is it important to make healthy choices when eating out? Research has shown that larger portion sizes, larger saturated fat and sodium content of foods have contributed to the obesity epidemic. Four main points to keep in mind when dining out or eating fast food:

1. **Eat a balanced diet:** If you know that you will have to eat out later in the day, make healthier choices for the prior meals and snacks.
2. **Choose foods low in fat, especially saturated and trans fats for optimal heart health:** Choose grilled, broiled, or baked cuts of meat over fried, or a plain baked potato with salsa instead of French fries.
3. **Avoid high levels of sodium:** Again, if you know that you will be eating out later in the day, cut back on sodium during other meals and snacks.

Research has shown the correlation between obesity and fast food consumption for many years. One research study conducted by the American College of Clinical Nutrition compared the diet quality and overweight status of free-living adults who were aged 20 years and older. Results of this study showed that an examination of fast food's contribution to day's total intake showed that fast food provided more than one-third of day's energy, total fat and saturated fat in the diet of males and females. Also, fast food was high in energy density, or the number of kilocalories of energy obtained per 100 grams of food amount consumed, and provided 158 to 163 kilocalories per 100 grams of food consumed. Fast food eaters' diets were lower in vitamin A, carotenes, and vitamin C density. About ten percent of adults reported eating fast food on both survey days. Further, frequency of fast food consumption affected nutrient intakes. Energy and macronutrient intakes increased, and micronutrient density decreased as frequency of fast food consumption increased from zero days to two days. Day's intakes of nutritious foods such as fluid milk, fruits and fruit juices, and non-starchy vegetables decreased and non-diet carbonated beverages increased as the number of fast food days increased. The study concluded that fast food consumption was associated with a diet high in energy and

energy density and low in essential micronutrient density. Ultimately, the study showed that frequent fast food consumption may contribute to weight gain (American College Clinical Nutrition).

Today, more mothers' are in the labor force which cuts down on the time spent to prepare nutrition and healthy meals. Therefore, what effect does this have on children, fast food intake, and the obesity epidemic? A recent research study from the Journal of Pediatrics was conducted and found that the consumption of fast food among children in the United States seems to have an adverse effect on dietary quality in ways that might increase risk for obesity. The study revealed that from its origins in the 1950s, fast food has grown into a dominant dietary pattern among children in the United States today. It reported that consumption of fast food by children increased a remarkable fivefold from 2% of total energy in the late 1970s to 10% of total energy in the mid-1990s. Additionally, the number of fast-food restaurants more than doubled from 1972 to 1995 and now totals an estimated 247 115 nationwide. Moreover, fast food is prevalent in virtually all segments of society including local communities, public schools, and hospitals. Several dietary factors inherent to fast food may cause excessive weight gain such as massive portion size, high energy density, palatability (appealing to primordial taste preferences for fats, sugar, and salt), high content of saturated and trans fat, high glycemic load, and low content of fiber. Coupled with more women in the work force today, fast-food has contributed to the obesity epidemic in the United States (Pediatrics, 2004).

In another study conducted by the International Journal of Obesity, research showed that the epidemic of obesity is caused largely by an environment that discourages physical activity and encourages the over consumption of food energy. The study discussed environmental influences to be variables that increase the behaviors that contribute to creating a positive energy balance. Several of these variables included the availability, convenience and low price of fast foods, the pervasive influence of television advertising for fast foods, and the high population exposure to both television and fast food restaurants. In fact, the largest fast food restaurant in the US recently partnered with a well-known television manufacturer to give away free television sets in their restaurants. Behaviors include leisure time physical activity, sedentary behaviors such as television viewing, and dietary intake. Thus, fast food use is one of a cluster of inter-related behaviors that may contribute to excess weight gain and obesity. Results of this showed that twenty-one percent of the sample reported eating greater than three fast food meals per week. Frequency of fast food restaurant use was associated with higher total energy intake, higher percentage fat energy, more frequent consumption of hamburgers, French fries and soft drinks, and less frequent consumption of fiber and fruit. Frequency of fast food restaurant use was higher among younger women, those with lower income, non-White ethnicity, greater body weight, lower dietary restraint, fewer low-fat eating behaviors, and greater television viewing. Over a three year period, increases in frequency of fast food restaurant use were associated with increases in body weight, total energy intake, percentage fat intake, intake of hamburgers, French fries and soft drinks, and with decreases in physical activity, dietary restraint and low-fat eating behaviors. The study concluded that frequency of fast food restaurant use is associated with higher

energy and fat intake and greater body weight, and could be an important risk factor for excess weight gain in the population (International Journal of Obesity, 2000)

As the research demonstrates, obesity is a major risk factor attributed with fast food consumption. Find out how you can help to prevent this epidemic from occurring in the following portions of this website!

References:

Bowman, S., Vinyard, B. (2004). Fast-food consumption of u.s adults: impact on energy and nutrient intakes and overweight status. *Journal of the American College of Nutrition*, 23(2), 163.

Bowman, S., Gortmaker, C., Pereira, M., Ludwig, S. (2004). Effects of fast-food consumption on energy intake and diet quality among children in a nation household survey. *Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics*, 113(1), 112.

French, S., Harnack, L., Jeffery, R. (2000). Fast food restaurant use among women in the pound prevention study: dietary , behavioral and demographic correlates. *International Journal of Obesity*, 24, 1353.

Stoplight Nutrition On-the-Go: Check out this brief guide to healthy eating at Einstein’s Bagels and other fast food establishments:

RED: These food items should be eaten minimally and can hinder overall health if consumed on a consistent basis. If these items are selected, they should be e consumed in moderation.

YELLOW: Take caution with these food items; note comments next to the menu item for tips toward healthier options.

GREEN: These menu items are the best choices to select for optimal nutrition “on the go”.

Stoplight to Good Nutrition on the Go!



Individual Restaurant Ratings by Menu Items

Name of Restaurant/Item	Rating	Comments
Einstein honey wheat bagel	●	At 320 calories, 1g fat, 10g protein, 71g cho and 3g fiber this is one of the most nutritious options for breakfast on the go!
Einstein Honey Almond Smear	●	Add 2 TBSP of reduced fat honey almond cream cheese at 70 calories, and 5g fat and you have a nutritious and delicious breakfast to help fuel the morning!
Einstein Cheddar Omelet	●	With 590 calories, 20 g fat, 74g cho, 31g protein, eggs are a great source of protein! However, they are high in cholesterol and should be eaten sparingly.
Einstein Mocha *Regular 12 fl oz	●	Use caution when selecting specialty coffee drinks as these can be very high in calories, sugar, and even fat! With 310 calories, 16g fat, 34g cho, 8g pro this drink has enough “empty” calories to replace a small meal or snack.
Wendy’s Big Bacon Classic	●	While this item is acceptable in moderation, it provides 590 calories, 30g fat, 46g cho, and 34g protein and is very high in sodium.
McDonalds hamburger, plain	●	This is a healthy option when consumed in moderation. At 250 calories, 9g of fat, 31g cho, and 12 g protein this sandwich can fit into a healthy meal on the go!
McDonalds French fries (Medium)	●	At 380 calories, 20g fat, 47g CHO, and 4 g of protein this item is best consumed in moderation. Ask for a side salad with low-fat dressing on the side.
McDonalds Asian Salad w/ Grilled Chicken (without dressing)	●	With 300 calories, 10g fat, 23 cho, and 32g protein this can be a healthy option. However, it is high in sodium with 840mg so is best consumed in moderation. Ask for low fat dressing on the side!

Fast Food 101: Healthy Habits:

Lets face it. Every now and again there just isn't enough time in the day. You had to stay at work late, pick up the kids from practice, and the last thing on your mind is making a healthy dinner. Or, you woke up late and have to drop the kids off to school. The first thought may be to swing through your favorite fast food restaurant for a sausage and egg breakfast sandwich, or a double cheeseburger, large fries, and large pop. But, fast food can be healthy if you know how to make the most of your fast food meal. Making good choices when you are eating out will help you maintain a healthy diet. Knowing what types of menu items are healthier than others can help limit temptation and will also help you encourage your children to eat healthy as well. When ordering breakfast, choose a plain bagel, toast, or English muffin. Other muffins may contain lots of sugar and fat. Add fruit juice or low-fat or fat-free milk. Order cold cereal with fat-free milk, pancakes without butter, or plain scrambled eggs. Limit bacon and sausage because they are high in fat.

Some basics to keep in mind at lunch and dinner include portions (no supersizing!), high fat and calorie sauces and dressings, and soda. While in many cases the superzied meal may be cheaper instantaneously, it can and will cause health problems in the future. Watch out for words like **jumbo, giant, deluxe, biggie-sized** or **super-sized**. Again, larger portions mean more calories. They also mean more fat, cholesterol and salt. Order a regular or junior-sized sandwich instead.

Secondly, avoid high fat sauces and cheeses, and creams that add unneeded calories and fat. Choose grilled or broiled sandwiches with meats such as lean roast beef, turkey or chicken breast, or lean ham. Order items plain, without toppings, rich sauces, or mayonnaise. Cheese carries an extra 100 calories per ounce, as well as added fat and sodium. Add flavor with mustard, and crunch with lettuce, tomato, and onion. Lastly, soda is a major contributor to extra calories that are not nutrient dense. Instead, ask for coffee, tea, or water, or skip the beverage all together.

Remember, if you're having fast-food for one meal, let your other meals that day contain healthier foods, like fruits and vegetables. Moderation is always key, but planning ahead can help you relax and enjoy your dining out experience without sacrificing good nutrition or diet control

Fast Food Tips: Healthy Eating on the Go!

Quick Tips!

- Choose foods that are fat-free or lower in fat
- Choose grilled, broiled, steamed or baked foods instead of fried
- Choose plain chicken or fish instead of breaded or battered
- Choose ketchup or mustard instead of mayonnaise, sauces or gravies
- Choose salad dressings that are fat-free or low-fat
- Choose small fries instead of larger sizes
- Choose fat-free or low-fat milk
- Choose frozen yogurt or low-fat ice cream
- Choose regular, plain hamburger instead of double size or cheeseburger
- Choose salsa instead of cheese or sauces in burritos and tacos

Top 12 Tips for Eating on the Run!

1. Hunger can drive you to eat too much bread before your meal arrives. Hold the bread or chips until your meal is served. Out of sight, out of mind.
2. Think about your food choices for the entire day. If you're planning a special restaurant meal in the evening, have a light breakfast and lunch.
3. Limit the amount of alcohol you drink. No more than one drink for women and two for men. Alcohol tends to increase your appetite and provides calories without any nutrients.
4. Order the regular or child-size portion. Mega-sized servings are probably more than you need. For a lighter meal, order an appetizer in place of a main course.
5. At the sandwich shop, choose lean beef, ham, turkey or chicken on whole grain bread. Ask for mustard, ketchup, salsa or low-fat spreads. And, don't forget the veggies.
6. Be size-wise about muffins, bagels, croissants and biscuits. A jumbo muffin has more than twice the fat and calories of the regular size.
7. Eat your lower-calorie food first. Soup or salad is a good choice. Follow up with a light main course.
8. Always eating on the go? Tuck portable, nonperishable foods in your purse, tote, briefcase or backpack for an on-the-run meal. Some suggestions are peanut butter and crackers, granola bars, a piece of fresh fruit, trail mix, single serve packages of whole grain cereal or crackers.
9. At the salad bar, pile on the dark leafy greens, carrots, peppers and other fresh vegetables. Lighten up on mayonnaise-based salads and high-fat toppings. Enjoy fresh fruit as your dessert.
10. Split your order. Share an extra large sandwich or main course with a friend or take half home for another meal.
11. Boost the nutrition in all types of sandwiches by adding tomato, lettuce, peppers or other vegetables.
12. A baked potato offers more fiber, fewer calories and less fat than fries if you skip the sour cream and butter. Top your potato with broccoli and a sprinkle of cheese or salsa.

Information from the American Dietetic Association, 2008

Current Nutrition in the News:

Bad Breakfast Habits Can Harm Long-Term Health: SKIPPING breakfast and snacking on sugary and fatty foods could be fuelling Britain's rising obesity rates among the under 25s. A new survey commissioned by Cancer Research UK into the nation's breakfast habits discovered that nearly half the 16-24 age group miss breakfast - the first and most important meal of the day - at least twice a week. Read more here about its effects on obesity! <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/102089.php>.

Promotion Description:

Please visit the “This Month’s Healthy Eating Tip” Bulletin Board located in the University of Michigan Hospital Cafeteria to enter to win this useful recipe book, “Lickety-Split Meals”, an extremely educational and motivating cook-book for anyone trying to lose weight and reduce fat intake, as well as including tips to lower cholesterol, control diabetes, reduce the risk of cancer, increase energy level or enhance sports performance!

Related Websites:

Fast Food Facts: Websites to Help Guide Healthy Eating on the Run!

With our busy lifestyles demanding more and more of our time, it is often just not enough time in the day! Contrary to belief, fast food can be part of a healthy diet if consumed in moderation. Listed below are several websites for reference when trying to plan a healthy, nutritious meal while on the go!

1. **MFIT:** MFit is the Health Promotion Division of the University of Michigan Health System (UMHS) that provides medically-based personalized health and wellness programs and services to UMHS patients, UM employees, the greater Washtenaw County community, and employers in Michigan. Check out their website for healthy tips on food, nutrition, exercise, and eating on the go!

<http://www.med.umich.edu/mfit/nutrition/knowhow/june2.htm>

2. **Test your fast food knowledge!** This site is intended to quiz participants on their understanding of nutrition and fast foods:

<http://body.aol.com/diet/basics/fast-food-nutrition-facts>

3. **Your favorite restaurants do list nutritional information on select items!**

Applebees has information regarding weight watchers items, Ruby Tuesday provides information on variety of items, and Chili’s is promoting a children’s menu promoting healthier options for kids. Panera also has comprehensive nutrition information available on their website. Check out them out!!!

Applebee’s: http://www.applebees.com/Menu_WW.aspx

Ruby Tuesday: <http://www.rubytuesday.com/files/Nutrition.pdf>

Chili’s: <http://www.chilis.com/menu/default.asp>

Panera Bread: <http://www.panerabread.com/menu/>

4. **Shopping, cooking, and Meal Planning:** Check out nutrition.gov for information on tips for shopping, preparing, and planning healthy meals! Learn how to read food labels and prepare healthy meals, fast. Type in the search field “fast “food” and several links will be available to help promote healthy nutrition on the go!

www.nutrition.gov

5. Others: Check out these other resources for a variety of nutrition tips and information!

Nutrition Information: www.mypyramid.org

Food Label Reading: <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/foodlab.html>

Nutrition and Physical Activity: www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/publications/aag/dnpa.htm

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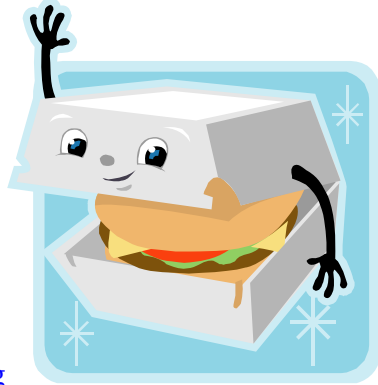
Patient Food and Nutrition Services

Dietetic Intern 2007-2008

Images for Page:

Stoplight: <http://www.stop-n-drive.com/images/stoplight-for-web2.jpg>

Fast Food: http://www.best-of-web.com/_images/080101-



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