

Making Smart Choices at Fast Food

Over ½ of Americans eat fast food every week. Here are ways to make your fast food experience nutritious and satisfying.

We all find ourselves there every so often. Traveling or in a rush, our only available option seems to be a fast food restaurant. The question is: can we make good choices even in environments that promote super-sized portions and many foods laden with fat and calories? Equipped with a little information and some common sense, the answer is an absolute, “yes!”

Recently, the Center for Science in the Public Interest analyzed the nutritional content of many options at our most popular fast food chains. They found what we already knew to be true: many items are *alarmingly high in fat and calories*. . ., but in every chain, there were reasonable and even nutritious choices to be made.

Here are a few tips to help guide your way to a satisfying and nutritious fast food meal.

- ✓ Go grilled: grilled chicken or fish sandwiches are low-fat, low-calorie choices.
- ✓ Hold the mayo, hold the special sauce and cheese. They're high in fat and calories.
- ✓ Extra veggies. Ask for extra tomatoes, extra lettuce on your sandwich.
- ✓ Skip the fries – or if you must, order a small (even when pressured to super-size it.)
- ✓ Drink diet. Choose a diet soda. Better yet, order iced tea or water with lemon.
- ✓ Try yogurt. Some fast food restaurants have a low-fat yogurt option with real fruit.
- ✓ Say salad. Try a garden salad. Order fat-free or low-fat dressing.
- ✓ Skip the shakes. Treat yourself later to a small nonfat frozen yogurt at home.

Fast food restaurants are a big part of American culture and with smart choices, can offer nutritious and tasty meals.

References:

Center for Science in the Public Interest. (Sept. 2002). Nutrition Action Health Letter, 29(7).