



Healthy foods for busy days



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Does your family eat fast food often? If so, be mindful about the choices you make. Most fast food meals and snacks are:

- High in fat, sugar, calories and salt. These are things to eat in small amounts.
- Low in fiber, calcium, potassium and Vitamin D. You need to get enough of these nutrients.
- Short on fruits, vegetables, whole grains and milk.



Super-sized servings may not be a good deal. Instead, they provide more food than your family needs. They encourage people to eat until they are stuffed instead of eating until satisfied. This sets the stage for overeating and weight problems. Regular size and child size servings have enough nutrients for most adults and children.

Young children have a natural ability to follow hunger signals and appetite. They know when they are hungry and when they have had enough to eat. Big portions from fast food restaurants may overwhelm their natural ability to stop eating when they are full and cause them to eat more than they need.

Choose foods with less added sugars

- Instead of soda, order milk, 100 percent juice or water for your child. You may want to choose unsweetened tea, coffee or a diet soda.
- Instead of fruit pie or cookies, choose fruit. Some restaurants have fruit on the menu. If not, have an apple, banana, grapes for something sweet when you get home.



Choose foods with less fat

- Order regular-size burgers, burritos and tacos instead of the larger sizes.
- Split a small order of fries, or skip the fries and order a side salad or fruit.
- Order grilled chicken instead of fried chicken.
- Skip the extra cheese on pizza.
- Use mustard instead of mayonnaise.
- Go easy on sour cream and butter.

Choose foods with more bone-building calcium

- Drink low-fat milk instead of soda with fast foods.
- Order cheese on a burger or sandwich.

Choose more fruits and vegetables

- Ask for tomatoes, lettuce and other vegetables on sandwiches.
- Get a salad or fruit instead of fries.
- Order a pizza loaded with vegetables.



Children learn many of their food habits from watching their parents at home and when eating out.

It is important to choose and eat healthier foods in normal size portions. Help your child choose healthful food items, then let him or her decide how much they are going to eat.

Reviewed by: Jenni Kinsey, MS, RD, LD & Hasina Rakotomanana, MS.

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