

Eating Healthy at the Drive-Thru

Fast Food Fundamentals:

Hectic family schedules often lead to feeding busy families in a hurry with meals from the drive-thru. Most fast food tends to be highly processed and low-quality foods. It is often high in calories, fat, sugar, and sodium and lacking fruits and vegetables. Although many fast food items taste good they are not good choices for providing families with the nutrients needed for growing and for maintaining good health.



Here is a guide to making better fast food choices for the whole family!

Does “Healthy” Fast Food Exist?

Yes! However, it can be difficult to know which are the better food choices. Generally, healthier options will be items that are lower in fat and calories such as salads, fruits, vegetables, low fat yogurts and grilled or broiled meats. Using this guide will help you find the healthier options at your family’s favorite drive-thru.



How Many Calories Does My Family Need?

Think of calories as fuel for the body. If you don’t have enough, you will get tired and run out of energy. If you have too much, you will gain weight and feel sluggish. Just the right amount will power you through the whole day.

For Moderately Active Families*

Family Members:

Calories Needed Per Day:

Children (age in years)

2-3

1000-1400

4-8

1400-1600

9-13

1600-2000 girl, 1800-2200 boy

14-18

2000 girl, 2400-2800 boy

Adults

2000 women, 2600-2800 men

*Based on the Institute of Medicine Dietary Reference Intakes Macronutrients Report, 2002

Foods To Go and Foods That Slow



Green light foods: have less than 300 calories per serving; choose these foods often

Yellow light foods: have 300-400 calories per serving; choose these foods less often

Red light foods: have more than 400 calories per serving; try to avoid these foods!

*Note: The following list does not contain all items available at fast food restaurants. This list should be used as a guide for selecting individual items based on calorie content to build your own meal; entrees and side items are not listed separately.

Green	Yellow	Red
<p>McDonald's Caesar Salad w/Grilled Chicken (no Caesar dressing, pick lite) Single Hamburger Side Salad Fruit n' Yogurt Parfait</p> <p>Wendy's Grilled Chicken Salad Jr. Hamburger Small Chili Side Salad</p> <p>Burger King Tendergrill Garden Salad Fresh Apple Fries Hamburger</p> <p>Drinks Unsweetened Iced Tea Skim or 1% Milk 100% Juice Water</p>	<p>McDonald's Chicken McGrill (hold the mayo) Cheeseburger Bacon Ranch Salad Hot Fudge Sundae</p> <p>Wendy's Taco Salad Small Frosty Grilled Chicken Sandwich Jr. Bacon Cheeseburger</p> <p>Burger King Whopper Jr. Small Shake Chicken Tenders Dutch Apple Pie</p> <p>Drinks Low-fat Chocolate Milk Small Soft Drinks Small Shakes</p>	<p>McDonald's 5 piece Chicken Selects Large French Fries McChicken Big Mac Small Chocolate Shake</p> <p>Wendy's Bacon & Cheese Potato Spicy Chicken Sandwich Big Bacon Classic Biggie French Fries</p> <p>Burger King Whopper BK Big Fish King Size Onion Rings Small Strawberry Shake</p> <p>Drinks Medium or Larger Soft Drinks Medium or Larger Shakes</p>

Tips for Better-for-you Fast Food:

Try:

- * Salads, fruit, or veggies as a side dish
- * Veggie toppings: lettuce, tomato, onions
- * Ketchup and mustard sauces
- * Water, low-fat milk, or 100% juice
- * Single patty hamburgers
- * Grilled, broiled, or baked meats and poultry
- * Low-fat or fat-free dressings

Avoid:

- * Anything large, jumbo or double sized
- * French fries as a side dish
- * Mayo, creamy sauces, oils, spreads
- * Sugary soft drinks
- * Anything "crispy" or fried
- * Cheese, bacon, and croutons as toppings
- * Creamy salad dressings