

Lunch in the fast lane

Tips for getting the most taste and nutrients from your fast food choices

- Ask for whole wheat (or whole grain) bread for sandwiches
- Order steamed, grilled (skinless and boneless) or broiled sandwich meats instead of those that are fried, sautéed, or prepared in sauce
- Order vegetable side dishes that are not fried or prepared in sauce
- Top your sandwiches with extra vegetables such as lettuce and tomato and hold high-calorie condiments such as mayonnaise and dressing
- Use mustard instead of mayonnaise
- Top a salad with grilled chicken to get a serving of protein at times when you don't want a sandwich
- Drink water, fat-free or low-fat milk, unsweetened tea or other drinks without added sugars
- Ask for your salad dressing to be low-fat/low-calorie and separate from the salad. Then use only as much as you need for taste
- Add little or no butter to your food
- Choose fruits and/or low-fat yogurt as your dessert

Most fast-food restaurants have lists of their menu items and the nutritional content of each including calories, fat and other helpful information. Ask for a copy. Reading the information can be a real eye-opener. If you are with a friend for lunch, ask each other lunch trivia questions from the nutrition information. The loser buys lunch next time!

The following is a good example of how easy it can be to fit the five basic food groups into your lunch plan and still enjoy a delicious meal at a fast food restaurant:

- **Whole grains** = whole wheat bun or sandwich bread
- **Vegetables** = extra lettuce and tomato
- **Meat/beans** = grilled chicken
- **Milk** = yogurt or low-fat milk
- **Fruit** = fruit topping on yogurt

Other tips:

- Your total salt intake for the day should equal to no more than one teaspoon (or 2,400 milligrams). Avoid adding salt to your meals, and pat yourself on the back for caring about the health of your heart. Too much salt is one of the leading causes of high blood pressure.
- To drink, stick with water, diet-soda, unsweetened tea or coffee.
- Be aware of hidden calories, such as those in condiments:
 - Ketchup
 - Mustard
 - Mayonnaise
 - Relish

Things to look for in a convenience store

Grains

- Whole grain crackers
- Whole grain pretzels

Fruits

- Dried fruit
- 100% fruit juice
- Low-sugar canned fruit or snack packs (example: Applesauce)
- Fresh fruit

Vegetables

- Low-sodium vegetable juice
- Fresh salad or lunch sized packaged vegetables (example: Mini carrots)

Meats/Beans

- Pre-packaged, low-sodium luncheon meats
- Nuts
- Hard-boiled eggs

Dairy

- Low-fat milk
- Low-fat yogurt
- Low-fat string cheese