



# Fast FOODS

*A fast lane to trouble*

America has been called a “fast food nation” and for good reason. **Everyday, one out of four Americans eats fast food.** If you are eating out, or taking someone you support out, fast food restaurants are often the cheapest option. **Unfortunately, it’s not usually a healthy one.** Eating just one fast food meal can pack enough calories, sodium, and fat for an entire day, but the quick-and-cheap temptation can be hard to resist.

The **good news** is that many chain restaurants are adding healthier foods to their menus. Read on to learn how to make smart choices and maintain your healthy diet goals when eating out!



## Top tips for **HEALTHY EATING** at fast food restaurants

- ✓ **Look before you leap** – Decide what you can and should order before you arrive ~ it will make it easier to avoid less nutritious, higher calorie meals.
- ✓ **Eat mindfully** – Mindful eating means paying attention to what you eat, enjoying each bite, and choosing foods that are both nourishing and enjoyable. Being mindful about food also means eating until you are not quite full (which is hard to do if your attention is elsewhere).
- ✓ **“Undress” your food** – When choosing, be aware of additions such as salad dressings, cheese, sour cream, etc. Sometimes making your choice healthier is as simple as removing the mayonnaise.
- ✓ **Avoid buffets** – All-you-can-eat buffets, even seemingly healthy ones like salad bars, promote overeating.
- ✓ **Don’t be afraid to special order** – Most restaurants have plenty of things that are good for you, but they are served
- in heavy sauces. Ask for your vegetables and main dishes to be served without the sauces.
- ✓ **Watch portion size** – At a typical restaurant, one serving provides enough calories for at least two meals. If you can’t order a smaller portion, it is a good rule of thumb to leave at least 1/3 to 1/2 of the meal on your plate.
- ✓ **Share** – Sharing entrees, appetizers, and desserts with dining partners is a great idea. This helps to not overeat.
- ✓ **Order sauce and dressing on the side** – If you ask for sauces and dressings on the side, you can control the amount that you eat.
- ✓ **Remember the big picture** – If it is a special occasion, or you know you want to order your favorite meal at a nice restaurant, cut back on your earlier meals that day.



## WATCH your salt!

Even when items are low-fat or low calories, restaurant food tends to be very high in sodium – a major cause of high blood pressure.

So what should you order? See some examples below:



### The BIG Burger Chains

Healthy Choices	Unhealthy Choices
1. Garden salad with grilled chicken and low-fat dressing	1. Double-patty hamburger with cheese, mayo, special sauce and bacon
2. Regular, single-patty hamburger without mayo or cheese	2. Fried chicken sandwich
3. <b>Grilled</b> chicken sandwich	3. Fried fish sandwich
4. Veggie burger	4. Salad with toppings such as bacon, cheese, and ranch dressing
5. Egg on a muffin	5. Breakfast burrito with steak
6. Baked potato	6. French fries
7. Yogurt parfait	7. Milkshake
8. <b>Grilled</b> chicken strips	8. Chicken “nuggets” or tenders
9. Limiting cheese, mayo, and special sauces	9. Adding cheese, extra mayo, and special sauces



### The BIG Taco Chains

Healthy Choices	Unhealthy Choices
1. <b>Grilled</b> chicken soft taco	1. Crispy shell chicken taco
2. Black beans	2. <b>Refried</b> beans
3. Shrimp ensalada	3. Steak chalupa
4. <b>Grilled</b> “fresco” style steak burrito	4. Crunch wraps or gordita-type burritos
5. Veggie and bean burrito	5. Nachos with refried beans
6. Limiting sour cream, guacamole, or cheese	6. Adding sour cream, guacamole, or cheese

Remember, home cooking not only tastes better -- it is the best for you!