

If You Must Eat Fast Food ...

Fast food was invented with people busy like physicians in mind. Foreswearing fast food can be impossible and, in its own way, irrational when it can save you valuable time.

The key is to avoid the many fast food menu items stacked with calories, saturated fat, and sodium. Some guidelines by which to abide:

- Keep fast-food meals to 500 calories or fewer.
- Choose foods low in fat, higher in fiber and protein.
- Opt for whole grain buns or breads over refined grains.
- Pick good sides – not French fries, onion rings, noodles, or macaroni and cheese. Get a salad with light dressing, fresh fruit, or a baked potato – or bring sides easy to prepare at home: carrot or celery sticks, apple slices, cottage cheese, nuts, dried fruit.
- Consider ordering burgers or sandwiches from the kids menu or stick to one patty in a burger.
- Select grilled or roasted meats, not fried and breaded ones.
- Beware of what appears healthy but isn't, such as salads with high-fat dressing or high-calorie toppings.
- Go easy on condiments such as mayonnaise and oil-based “special sauces,” as well as cheese and sour cream.
- Zero out your beverages (no sweetened soda, fruit juice, lemonade or shakes).
- Order thin crust pizza and pick veggie toppings.
- Before you order and while waiting in line, look for menu items' nutritional data, usually available online and on your mobile device.

(Saleh 2019)