



Fast Food

Nutrition tips from DuPage Senior Citizens Council and Kane Senior Council

August 2023

Fast Food

Fast food is quick, convenient and no doubt delicious, but can it be part of a healthy diet?

Fast food meals are typically loaded with calories, sodium, and unhealthy fat—often enough in one meal for an entire day.

Most fast food meals also tend to be low in nutrients and almost totally lacking in fruit, vegetables, and fiber.

Eating Fast Food In Moderation

- Eating at a fast food restaurant on occasion will not totally ruin our healthy eating plans, in fact, allowing yourself the occasional treat will help you stick with an overall healthy eating pattern in the long run! Trying to avoid something that you enjoy eating completely could lead to eventually overindulging, allowing yourself little bits of unhealthy food every once in a while can be satisfying enough to stay on track long term.
- Know that you are going to be going out to lunch with friends? Eat a healthy breakfast and plan ahead to have a healthy dinner for later that evening. One less-than-healthy meal sandwiched in between two healthy meals will balance out!
- Have a few favorite fast food places? Pick one for this week and save the other for another week.
- A trip through our favorite drive-through will likely result in more calories than we normally consume. An extra workout can help balance those extra calories!

Fast Foods: tips and tricks for eating healthy when convenience is key



Healthy Fast Food Options

Mexican Fast Food:

- A salad bowl; lean protein, beans, and veggies over a salad instead of rice
- Corn tortillas often are smaller and have fewer calories (and more fiber) than flour.

Burger Places:

- A single burger patty, skip the cheese, and pile on the veggies, need fries? Order the small.

Pizza:

- Thin crust pizza topped with vegetables or choice and ask for less cheese

Sandwich Shops:

- Turkey or Chicken on whole grain bread, skip the mayo and cheese, and load up with veggies

Chicken Places:

- Ask for a grilled (not fried) sandwich and a side salad or soup instead of fries.
- Skip the bun altogether and order a salad with chicken on top and dressing on the side.

Fast Food Breakfast:

- Skip the pastries and sausage/bacon heavy sandwiches and look for something made with egg whites with fruit on the side.
- Drink coffee? Drink it like you would at home and resist the urge to upgrade to flavors, toppings and larger sizes which add up both in calories and cost!
- When possible choose turkey/chicken sausage over pork, the salt will likely be the same but you will save fat and calories.

In many cases allowing yourself the occasional treat will help you stick with healthy eating in the long run!