

CHOOSING HEALTHY AT FAST FOOD RESTAURANTS

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Choosing healthy foods while dining out can be a challenge.

"Can I help you sir?"

"I'd like a chicken sandwich with no mayonnaise and a side salad please."

"Low-fat?"

"Yes, low-fat."

But even when you eat at a fast food restaurant there are ways to make your choices healthy. Start with a healthy portion size.

"Would you like to super-size your meal?"

"No, thank you."

You may be tempted to answer "Yes" to increasing the size of your order. It may sound like a good deal money-wise, but bigger is not always better. Stick with the small size. You'll get the same taste but a lot less calories, fat and sodium, and still pay less.

"Well, they say you can get the combo. Say 'No, I don't want the combo, I want the individual sandwich with a drink' or something. If it's a breakfast meal, if you want the Egg McMuffin, just say 'Without the cheese and the ham.'"

Choose to get creative with combos. If you really want a higher-fat cheeseburger, then why not choose something a little healthier on the side? Instead of french fries, try a small salad, or a baked potato.

"If you get a baked potato, most of the time they come huge. They get those really big baked potatoes. But if I had the urge or wanted one, I would cut it in half once they brought it in. And all my ... everything else would be on the side, the butter and the sour cream. And if I had a taste for it, I would just dab it on a little bit."

If chicken is what you like, choose grilled chicken as a healthy substitute for deep-fried chicken items. Try a reduced fat taco at the Mexican fast food restaurant. Or hold the sour cream and cheese. Instead, you could order a little guacamole on the side. That has the good kind of fat in it. But watch your portion size – it's also high in calories.

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"May I take your order?"

Watch while Theresa and Dan order at a fast food restaurant.

"Can I get a cheeseburger, large fry and a large Coke? It's for here."

"And can I get a hamburger Happy Meal, please? With a diet drink."

Now let's take a look at the nutritional values of each meal. Dan's cheeseburger, large fries and regular soda amount to 1200 calories, while Theresa's kids meal is 500 calories. Can you see the difference? Which meal would you choose?

Today, even fast food restaurants are trying to provide you with healthy options. The next time you're ordering at the fast food restaurant you can make a healthy choice. You can skip the high-fat condiments, not mega-size that meal, or get creative with your combos.

Soon, even easy and convenient can mean healthy for you.

How many different healthy combos can you make the next time you order fast food?