

Fast food facts

[Nutrition](#)



Fast Food Facts: A Guide for Teens What is fast food and why is it so popular? Fast food is any food that is quick, convenient, and usually inexpensive. You can buy fast food just about anywhere that sells food and snacks. Vending machines and drive-thru restaurants are probably the most common places to find fast food. It's so popular because for under \$5.00 you can usually get a meal that's satisfying. But fast food is inexpensive because it is usually made with cheaper ingredients such as high fat meat and foods that contain lots of unhealthy fats (saturated and trans fats) and cholesterol, instead of nutritious foods such as lean meats, fresh fruits, and vegetables.

Is fast food bad? There is no such thing as a "bad" food. All foods can fit into a healthy meal plan! It's true that fast food is usually high in fat, calories, cholesterol, and sodium, but eating fast food every once in a while is not going to cause you problems. If you eat too much fast food over a long period of time, though, it can lead to health problems like high blood pressure, heart disease, and obesity. Is some fast food healthier than others?

If you are having fast food more than once a week, try to make healthier choices. Here are some tips:

- Choose foods that are broiled over fried such as a grilled chicken sandwich instead of fried chicken or chicken nuggets.
- Choose soups that are not cream based.
- Have low-fat salad dressings instead of the full-fat kind.
- Have a salad or soup instead of fries.
- Use mustard or ketchup instead of mayonnaise.
- Order smaller entrée portions in general. For example: instead of a large sub, try a small sub with a side salad or piece of fruit.
- Order smalls instead of "super-sizing." A large fry has 540 calories and 26 grams of fat, but a small fry has about 60% less fat and calories (210 calories and 10 grams of fat).
- When ordering a sub or sandwich, select leaner meats like turkey or grilled chicken instead of fried

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items, like a burgers or steak and cheese sandwiches. - Choose water, low-fat milk, or diet sodas instead of regular sodas, fruit drinks, and milkshakes. - When ordering pizza, add veggies instead of meat. - If fruit and veggies are available, try to add them into your meal. For example, have lettuce and tomato on sandwiches or burgers. Where can I find nutrition facts about fast food? You can check out your favorite fast food place or restaurant on the internet. You can find the company web site by doing a google search. Once you have found the web site, look for the " nutrition section". There is usually a link on the home page to the nutrition section where you will find nutrition facts, including fat, cholesterol, sodium, protein, calories, and more. Most companies have a web site which includes useful nutrition information. This will help you make good choices when eating out! Remember: There are many healthy food choices that are easily available, tasty, and don't cost very much that can be eaten on the go. Try to balance fast food with other nutritious foods throughout the day and make healthier choices whenever possible. Many fast food restaurants have their nutrition information available on-site or on the internet; take a look at it to help you choose healthier options. Written by the Center for Young Women's Health Staff Updated 10/16/2005 Related Information: - Backpack Snacks - The Importance of Dietary Fat & Cholesterol