



Extension FactSheet

Family and Consumer Sciences, 1787 Neil Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43210

Life in the Fast Food Lane: Are You Living in the Fast Lane?

Living on fast food? What's your excuse?

- Can't cook.
- Don't like to cook.
- Don't like to clean up.
- Don't have time.
- Not worth the effort "just for me."

Fast food can fit into a healthy diet! Here is your guide for picking healthy fast foods!

- The food should fit into one or all of the basic food groups, based on a reference 2000 calorie intake.
 - 3 servings of low-fat or nonfat milk or dairy products
 - 6-ounce equivalents of breads/cereals/grains; ½ should be whole grains
 - 2 cups of fruits
 - 2½ cups of vegetables
 - 5.5-ounce equivalents of meat or meat substitutes
- The food contains a low amount of the following nutrients:
 - sugars
 - fat, especially saturated fat
 - salt
 - calories
- The food has fewer calories and more nutrients than other choices

Take a new turn to healthy foods

Reduce fats, saturated fats, and cholesterol

- Choose plain burgers, or beef or grilled chicken sandwiches; leave off the sauce, mayonnaise, cheese, and bacon.
- Regular yellow mustard can be used as a sauce.

- Avoid or limit fried foods—fish, chicken, French fries, onion rings, etc.
- Select broiled or grilled instead of fried.
- Drink water, diet pop, tea, coffee, or 1% or skim milk.
- Order your tacos on a plain soft tortilla.
- Skip croissants and biscuits.
- Eat raw veggies and green salads with a low-fat oil-based dressing.
- Choose small portions; don't choose a large or up-sized value meal.
- Skip dessert.
- Avoid coffee "whiteners," such as creamers or sugars.

Limit sugar

- Use less ketchup, pickle relish, honey mustard, jelly, honey, BBQ sauce, etc.
- Avoid gelatin salads.
- Avoid sweetened fruits at the salad bar—use fresh fruit instead.
- Avoid sweetened soft drinks and shakes—ask for milk, water, tea, or coffee.
- Skip sweet desserts.

Yield to the right choices

Limit sodium

- No pickles.
- Limit salad dressings—use a lemon wedge instead.
- Some diet pops have sodium, others don't—ask.
- Avoid processed poultry and meat (chicken nuggets, some roast beef).
- Limit sausage, ham, bacon, and biscuits.
- Ask for fries without salt.
- Don't add table salt to meals.
- Limit cheese.

Increase fiber

- Choose fresh vegetables and fruits at the salad bar.
- Select sandwiches with tomatoes and lettuce.
- Choose whole grain or multi-grain buns.
- Eat baked potatoes and the skins—go easy on the toppings.
- Choose foods that include dry beans—burritos, chili, salad bar toppings.

Start in this lane**Tips to remember**

- Breakfasts are easy to make at home; buy prepackaged 6-ounce yogurts and have quick items such as cereals, bagels, English muffins, juice, and milk on hand.
- Frozen, low-fat healthy meals that are microwaveable will provide correct serving sizes and are easy to prepare. These are convenient meals for lunch or dinner.
- Weekly meals should be a combination of quick cooking ideas, frozen dinners, and supplemental foods (fresh, frozen, canned, and deli). Try to limit eating out when possible.
- Choose a lighter option such as fresh salads with grilled chicken, fruit bowls with low-fat yogurt, or substituting a side salad or plain baked potato for French fries.
- Check out <http://www.mypyramid.gov> for individualized recommendations based on age, sex, and activity level.

Sample menu

Eating right is possible. All it takes is a little planning. Buying prepackaged fruits and vegetables, and planning ahead what you will order when eating out will help. This menu is based on a 2000 calorie diet. Visit fast food company websites for printable nutrition guides that you can carry with you to help make the healthiest selections!

Week one		
Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Sunday		
½ cup grapefruit or cantaloupe 1 medium sized whole wheat bagel with fat-free cream cheese 8 ounces 1% or skim milk, coffee, or tea	1 grilled chicken breast ½ cup steamed green beans 1 whole wheat roll with spray butter ½ cup cherry tomatoes ½ cup apple wedges and grapes 8 ounces 1% or skim milk	Vegetable pizza (2 medium-sized slices) 2 cups tossed salad with fat-free or low-fat dressing with lemon wedge Banana Iced or hot tea
Monday		
1 cup orange juice English muffin with jam 8 ounces 1% or skim milk, coffee, or tea	1 grilled chicken breast sandwich (no sauce) with lettuce and tomato ½ cup fresh fruit 6 ounces yogurt 1 cup carrot sticks, broccoli, and cauliflower with low-calorie dip No-calorie beverage	1 cup lite lasagna frozen dinner 1 cup cooked zucchini with basil and Parmesan cheese ½ cup fresh pineapple 8 ounces 1% or skim milk or no-calorie beverage
Tuesday		
1 cup orange juice Whole wheat bagel with jelly or honey 8 ounces 1% or skim milk, coffee, or tea	1 roast beef sandwich on unbuttered bun with lettuce, tomato, ketchup ½ cup fresh fruit from home 8 ounces low-fat chocolate milk	1 sweet and sour chicken frozen dinner with brown rice ½ cup coleslaw with low-fat or fat-free mayo ½ cup cantaloupe and watermelon No-calorie beverage

Wednesday		
½ cup fresh fruit in season 1 cup shredded wheat or bran flakes 8 ounces 1% or skim milk, coffee, or tea	1 plain hamburger on unbuttered bun with lettuce, tomato, ketchup (no cheese or mayo) Small French fries 1 cup orange juice or no-calorie beverage	1 low-fat frozen dinner ½ cup corn Side salad with low-fat or fat-free dressing (1 cup) 1 whole wheat roll 8 ounces 1% or skim milk
Thursday		
1 cup orange juice 1 medium-sized bran muffin 8 ounces 1% or skim milk, coffee, or tea	2 beef soft tacos with taco sauce (no sour cream) Side salad with low-fat dressing ½ cup fresh fruit from home 8 ounces 1% or skim milk	1 low-fat frozen dinner or 1 rice bowl 1 baked tomato half with grated mozzarella cheese ½ cup peach, kiwi, melon salad with lemon yogurt dressing No-calorie beverage
Friday		
1 cup orange juice 1 medium-sized unbuttered biscuit with honey 8 ounces 1% or skim milk, coffee, or tea	1 small chili ½ cup mini carrots from home 1 cup fresh fruit from home No-calorie beverage	1 cup stir-fry beef with pea pods and rice ½ cup fresh or canned pineapple 1 cup side salad and low-fat dressing 8 ounces 1% or skim milk
Saturday		
1 cup orange juice 3 (3-inch diameter) pancakes with lite syrup 8 ounces 1% or skim milk, coffee, or tea	Microwave tuna patties (use water-packed tuna) ½ cup fresh berries 6 ounces yogurt ½ cup frozen mixed vegetables 8 ounces 1% or skim milk	4 ounces fried chicken without skin ½ cup mashed potatoes (no additional butter) 1 corn on the cob or green beans (½ cup) ½ cup red grapes No-calorie beverage
Week two		
Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Sunday		
1 cup orange juice 1 scrambled egg 1 slice whole wheat toast with jelly—no butter Coffee or tea	3 ounces broiled pork chops ½ cup canned baked beans 1 whole wheat roll with spray butter ½ cup coleslaw 8 ounces 1% or skim milk	Side salad and baked potato with broccoli and cheese Fresh fruit cup 8 ounces 1% or skim milk
Monday		
6 ounces orange juice 1 cup multi-grain cereal 8 ounces 1% or skim milk, coffee, or tea	1 roast beef sandwich on unbuttered bun with lettuce, tomato, ketchup Small French fries 1 cup fresh veggies with low-calorie dressing No-calorie beverage	1 low-fat frozen entrée dinner ½ cup broccoli with lemon juice 1 banana 8 ounces 1% or skim milk
Tuesday		
1 fresh fruit Plain bagel with jelly 8 ounces 1% or skim milk, coffee, or tea	Plain cheeseburger on unbuttered bun 1 cup tossed salad with fat-free dressing 1 cup orange juice	Broiled fish fillet Green beans Frozen au gratin potatoes Grated carrot/raisin salad with yogurt dressing 8 ounces 1% or skim milk, coffee, or tea

Wednesday		
1 cup orange juice English muffin with spray butter 8 ounces 1% or skim milk, coffee, or tea	4 chicken tenders/nuggets no sauce Side salad with low-fat or fat-free dressing 1 fresh fruit from home 8 ounces 1% or skim milk	2 cups spaghetti with tomato and meat sauce ½ cup cooked spinach au gratin (use low-fat cheese) ½ cup apple wedges and lemon yogurt No-calorie beverage
Thursday		
6 ounces orange juice 2 medium oatmeal muffins 8 ounces 1% or skim milk, coffee, or tea	Taco salad (no sour cream or chips) Fresh fruit cup No-calorie beverage	Oriental beef frozen dinner with rice and vegetables ½ cup hot sliced peaches with cinnamon 1 oatmeal raisin cookie 8 ounces 1% or skim milk
Friday		
1 cup orange juice Raisin bagel with fat-free cream cheese 8 ounces 1% or skim milk, coffee, or tea	2 slices double cheese pizza 1 cup tossed salad with low-calorie dressing 1 piece fresh fruit from home No-calorie beverage	Chicken and pasta frozen dinner with vegetables ½ cup steamed garden blend mixed vegetables 1 cup tomato wedges 8 ounces 1% or skim milk
Saturday		
½ cup cantaloupe, grapefruit, or orange sections 1 scrambled egg 1 English muffin with spray butter 8 ounces 1% or skim milk, coffee, or tea	1 grilled chicken breast on bed of fresh greens with low-fat balsamic vinaigrette dressing ½ cup canned peaches in lite syrup 8 ounces 1% or skim milk	1 cup broccoli and pasta with spaghetti meat sauce 1 cup tossed salad with lemon wedge or low-calorie dressing 1 piece fresh fruit No-calorie beverage
You can still eat well and not spend your life in the kitchen. All it takes is a little knowledge about how to choose and eat fast foods.		

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Keith L. Smith, Associate Vice President for Agricultural Administration and Director, OSU Extension