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Are our culinary habits killing our kids? Chubby children — A growing epidemic

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Would you like to get out of fast food pileups and hop on the expressway of good nutrition?

Then you need to think “outside the box.” Eating away from home when you’re in a time crunch does not automatically mean a trip to the Golden Arches for a super-sized combo meal.

The term fast food generally refers to restaurants that sell quick, inexpensive take-out food. Now, even supermarkets offer several choices, many of them nutritionally superior to fast food and it doesn’t take any more time than a five-car wait at the drive-thru.

It is possible to eat healthfully in the fast food lane. However, it may take some extra effort to get enough of the fruits, vegetables, and lean protein your body needs. Another challenge is to limit the amount of saturated fat and trans-fatty acids. Choose broiled or grilled food over fried foods and skip the heavy sauces and cheese. These often contain more fat than the protein itself. Fast

food doesn’t have to be fat food. There are more low-fat, low-calorie balanced meal options available now. Ask to see nutrient information at your favorite fast food restaurants. Careful food choices can make a big difference.

Here are some tips for making heart-healthy choices with fast food:

- Skip the mayonnaise or special sauce. A Burger King broiler with mayo has 530 calories and 26 grams of fat. A Burger King broiler without mayo has 370 calories and 9 grams of fat.

- Order it grilled or broiled not fried. A McDonald’s Chicken McGrill without mayo is 340 calories and has 7 grams of fat.

- A nine-piece McDonald’s Chicken McNuggets has 430 calories and 25 grams of fat.

- Hold the cheese. Wendy’s Cheeseburger kid’s meal has 320 calories and 13 grams of fat. Wendy’s Hamburger kid’s meal has 270 calories and 10 grams of fat.

- Use light or fat-free dressings. Subway’s creamy Italian dressing, 1 tablespoon is 65 calories and 7 grams of fat. Subway’s Italian fat-free dressing, 1 tablespoon has 5 calories and 0 grams of fat.

- Order smaller size burgers.

Burger King’s hamburger has 320 calories and 15 grams of fat. Burger King’s double whopper with cheese has 1,010 calories and 67 grams of fat.

- Order a baked potato instead. Wendy’s plain baked potato has 310 calories and 0 grams of fat. Wendy’s Great-Biggie fries has 570 calories and 27 grams of fat.

- Quench your thirst. Have a bottle of water instead of a soft drink.

It’s easy to make hormonally correct choices at a fast food restaurant.

Fortunately, fast food restaurants always have protein — unfortunately much of it is high fat. So do yourself a favor and choose the chicken. The secret to balancing a meal at fast food restaurants is to know when to stop adding carbohydrates.

The following are just a few hormonally correct, balanced fast food meals:

- Jack in the Box - Chicken Caesar salad (*dressing on the side*).

- Burger King - Broiled chicken salad, BK Broiler (*no mayo*).

- McDonald’s - Grilled chicken salad deluxe, McGrilled Chicken Classic.

- Wendy’s - Chili 12-ounce Grilled Chicken Sandwich.

HEALTH

- Taco Bell - Light Chicken Soft Taco, Steak Soft Taco.

The best fast food meals can be found in your supermarket. Simply grab a bunch of pre-cut vegetables and a bag of pre-washed salad. At the deli, get a quarter pound of low-fat protein, such as chicken, tuna, or turkey. Add the low-fat protein to your pre-cut vegetables and salad, top it off with some monosaturated olives and you have a hormonally correct, balanced fast food meal. It may be a little bit more expensive than your high-fat combo meal but aren’t you worth it?

The time crunch is most likely here to stay. However, all that’s needed is a little planning to get on the fast track to a balanced nutritional lifestyle.

Do you have a wellness related issue you would like to resolve? Send your questions to Dr. Patrece Frisbee at <drfrisbee@sobewell.com>.

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