



Fast Food Healthy Options

by accredited nutritionist Catherine Saxelby

Busy people often race from appointment to appointment, never leaving themselves time to prepare their lunch or dinner. So as our lives have become more frantic, more and more of us tend to grab a bite to eat and go!

Sadly many a time what we grab is not the right fuel, not giving us the vital nutrients our bodies need but with too much of the 'heavy stuff' – fat, salt and kilojoules.



THE 7 PROBLEMS WITH FAST FOOD

1 NOT BALANCED

Most fast food is high in fat, saturated fat, salt and kilojoules with very little in the way of fibre. On its own, it doesn't make a balanced meal, lacking vitamins and minerals – even though it's often advertised as a 'complete meal'.

2 EAT ONLY OCCASIONALLY

While nutritionists say that an 'occasional' fast food meal does no harm, they mean only *once a fortnight*.

3 KILOJOULE-LADEN

The sheer amount of fat and kilojoules you can take in is boggling. In our overweight sedentary world, no-one needs this level of intake. A standard burger from a chain will set you back 20 grams of fat (10g of it saturated) and 1800 kilojoules. Upsize to a 'whopper' or 'super' version and you'll get double or triple the kilojoules.

4 EVER EXPANDING PORTION SIZES

What used to be a standard serve of fries is now double or triple that of years ago. When McDonalds first began in 1955, a serve of fries weighed only 72 grams. Today, it's a fat-inducing 205 grams – almost three times as

FRIES
Was 72g
Now 205g
COKE
Was 200ml
Now 950ml



much. Coke serves have soared from an average 200ml glass in 1955 to a whopping 950ml bucket today. And researchers have shown that the bigger the serve you order, the more you'll tend to eat of it.

5 BEWARE MEAL DEALS

Fast food outlets are masters at getting you to order bigger for a fraction more ('another 30 cents more for the large serve' and 'two-for-one' meals deals). It's value for money – but it's a bargain that our waistlines don't need.

6 ENCOURAGES OVEREATING

Fast food is a fat-inducing way of eating. You eat with your hands – not a fork and knife. You eat while you walk or drive – not seated at a table. You chow down quickly – no leisurely dinners at take aways.

7 BAD SATURATED FAT

Most fast food has the worst sort of fat. Anything that's deep-fried ends up being high in saturated fat, because the common commercial frying fats are palm oil or beef tallow (both saturated). Chains are now starting to switch towards healthier oils for deep-frying, which will make a big difference.

But, even when it's not deep fried, fast food still has 'hidden' fats. Fat has many functions in fast food. It:

- keeps baked goods like buns or pizza base soft and moist
- makes corn chips or fries crisp
- creates an aroma in anything served hot.

...a fat-inducing way of eating.



HOW THE FAT AND KILOJOULES STACK UP

- » Hungry Jack's Double Whopper with Cheese meal deal – with a two-patty-and-cheese burger, large fries and a large Coke – shows how fast food packs the fat in.
- » It's got 7125 kilojoules and 88 grams of fat, 31 of which are saturated.
- » The recommended daily kilojoules for Australian women is roughly 8400; for men, it's 10,500.
- » And that saturated fat figure? You're getting your *total* intake for the day – in one meal.

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STAYING LEAN WITH FAST FOOD – HERE'S HOW:

- Only eat what you NEED.
- If there's a choice, opt for the smaller size.
- Don't buy anything named 'super', 'triple' or 'whopper'.
- Share large portions with a friend.
- Don't get fooled by upsized meals. It might cost only 40c more, but it costs you a lot in extra kilojoules you don't need.
- If you do buy two-for-one offers, don't eat it all at one sitting.
- Women – if you eat together with your man, don't eat the same sized portions.



Produced by nutritionist **Catherine Saxelby** to help busy people eat better and look after their health. You can find more handy tips, articles and quick recipes at Catherine's website www.foodwatch.com.au Catherine Saxelby is an award-winning food writer and author of *Nutrition for Life* and *Zest Cookbook* (Hardie Grant Books).

WHAT'S TO DRINK?

Don't drink in the kilojoules. Order:

- Water or mineral water
- Diet soft drinks
- Tea or coffee with low-fat milk
- Cappuccino with skim milk
- Sports waters (half the sugar of soft drink)



Or order the smallest size of fizzy drink, milkshake or sundaes. Or share with a friend.

10 BEST TAKE AWAYS

- 1 Barbecued chicken (remove skin) with jacket potato and cole slaw
- 2 Grilled chicken fillet burger (hold the sauce)
- 3 Clear Asian noodle soup with seafood, greens, bean shoots
- 4 Sushi accompanied by vegetable broth
- 5 Chinese stir-fry with steamed rice
- 6 Plain burger with salad
- 7 Lebanese/Turkish donor kebab with tabouli
- 8 Subway – any of the "Under six grams of fat" filled rolls
- 9 Thin-crust pizza with vegetarian topping
- 10 Chicken or lamb satays with peanut sauce

