

FITNESS BEAT



Issue 1: FOCUS ON FAST

Can I Survive on a Fast Food Diet?

Can fast foods be part of a complete diet? Can eating regularly at fast food restaurants be harmful to an athlete's performance?

The US is a nation of restaurants and many restaurants serve fast-foods.

Why are fast food restaurants so popular?

Fast food restaurants serve food that is filling & quick to fix...reasons that most teens, including athletes, find appealing.

Can fast food be nutritious?

Are all fast foods nutrient-poor (high in calories and low in nutrients)? No! Fast foods contribute protein, vitamins and minerals, not just calories. For example, a cheeseburger and chocolate milkshake provide 50% of the Daily Value for protein and calcium (a mineral) and also contain fair amounts of B vitamins and iron (a mineral). The Daily Value is a standard for a healthy diet for people over the age of 4. Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie daily diet. You can use the % Daily Value to calculate the total amount of a nutrient consumed each day. You can get nutritional information on fast foods at some fast food counters, or ask the restaurant manager if this information is available.



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Fast Food Questions

Is fast food high in sodium?

One concern is that fast foods are high in sodium. The recommended safe intake of sodium is 1,000 - 3,000 milligrams a day. *One* fast-food meal can easily provide half that amount!

Is fast food high in fat?

The amount of fat in fast food meals is another concern. Fat can provide half the calories of a fast food meal, however, your total fat consumption should be limited to 30% or less of a day's calories, with 10% or less of these calories from saturated

fat. Many fast foods are deep-fried, which adds more fat to foods.

What are some good choices?

To cut caloric intake, vary the fast food menu. Substitute low-fat milk or a sugar-free drink for a milkshake. Remember, a sugar-free drink doesn't contain calcium, so look for other ways to include calcium. You might use a smaller hamburger to decrease calories, or a cheeseburger to add calcium to the meal. Try substituting a salad for fries to cut calories (but watch how much

salad dressing you use).

Should I eat fast foods?

Eating at fast food restaurants can be part of a healthy diet. If you depended on fast foods for most or all of your meals, your diet probably will not be balanced. Even with occasional meals out, make wise food choices. At the other meals of the day, include foods that contain nutrients that could be missing in fast food meals and that contain less fat. Eating a variety of foods from the Food Guide Pyramid each day will help you to balance your diet for good health.



Fast Foods & Calories

Calories (and fat calories) vary greatly from restaurant to restaurant. Plain burgers may contain from 275 calories (140 calories from fat) to 420 calories (190 calories from fat) depending on the size of the meat patty. When cheese is added, the calorie content can jump an extra 50 to 100 calories or more. When mayonnaise or other sauces are added, the total calories can approach nearly 640 calories (350 calories from fat).

Calories in fries vary also, depending on the size of the order. Medium fries might contain 350 calories (160 calories from fat) while a large order might contain 470 calories (about 200 calories from fat).

Chocolate shakes can range from just over 300 calories to nearly 700 calories.

While these foods provide essential nutrients, the fat content is often high. Once again, offset a fast-food meal with lower fat choices the rest of the day.

For more information on the calorie content (and the fat calories) in fast foods, log onto the following websites:

www.arbys.com

www.burgerking.com

www.dairyqueen.com

www.dominos.com

www.eastofchicago.com

www.mcdonalds.com

www.pizzahut.com

www.tacobell.com