



# K-State Extension Connection

## **For Immediate Release:**

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The mission of K-State Research and Extension Family and Consumer Sciences is to link education with life experiences to help people improve their lives, their families and their communities. Family and Consumer Sciences professionals support essential life skills including Community Development, Healthy Lifestyle Choices, Leadership & Volunteer Development, Relationship Development and Resource Management.

## **Fast Food In A Healthy Eating Plan?**

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**Does a hectic schedule have your family opting for fast food rather than a healthy homemade meal more often that you would like?**

**Well, take heart, dining at a fast food restaurant doesn't have to be a diet disaster.** Each restaurant has at least a few healthier options to choose from, so an occasional stop for fast food can fit into a healthy diet if you're careful about what you order.

**These tips can help you make wise meal choices when going to a fast-food restaurant.**

### **Keep Portion Sizes Small:**

If the fast-food restaurant offers several sandwich sizes, pick the smallest. Bypass hamburgers with two or three beef patties, which can pack close to 800 calories and 40 grams of fat. Choose instead a regular- or children's-sized hamburger, which has about 250 to 300 calories. And skip the large serving of French fries or onion rings and ask for a small serving instead. This switch alone saves 200 to 300 calories.

### **Choose Healthier Sides:**

Take advantage of the healthy side dishes offered at many fast-food restaurants. For example, instead of French fries choose a side salad with low-fat dressing or a baked potato. Or add a fruit bowl or a fruit and yogurt option to your meal. Other healthy choices include apple or orange slices, corn on the cob, steamed rice, or baked potato chips.

**Go Green:**

Choose an entree salad with grilled chicken, shrimp or vegetables with fat-free or low-fat dressing on the side, rather than regular salad dressing, which can have 100 to 200 calories a packet. Watch out for high-calorie salads, such as those with deep-fried shells or those topped with breaded chicken or other fried toppings. Also skip extras, such as cheese, bacon bits and croutons, which quickly increase your calorie count. If you forgo the dressing, you can find salads for around 300 calories at most fast-food chains.

**Opt for Grilled Items:**

Fried and breaded foods, such as crispy chicken sandwiches and breaded fish fillets, are high in fat and calories. Select grilled or roasted lean meats — such as turkey or chicken breast, lean ham, or lean roast beef.

**Watch What You Drink:**

Many beverages are high in calories. For example, a large regular soda (32 ounces, or 946 milliliters) has about 300 calories. Instead, order diet soda, water, unsweetened iced tea, sparkling water or mineral water. Also, skip the shakes and other ice cream drinks. Large shakes can contain more than 800 calories and all of your saturated fat allotment for the day.

**Have It Your Way:**

Remember you don't have to settle for what comes with your sandwich or meal — not even at fast-food restaurants. Ask for healthier options and substitutions. And keep your eye on portion sizes.

**Fast Food is probably not the best choice for every day of the week since even the healthier choices may still be overloaded with sodium.** However, if you choose carefully, you can come out with a meal in your hands that doesn't end up on your hips.

For more information, contact the Wildcat Extension District, Crawford County, 620-724-8233; Labette County, 620-784-5337; Montgomery County, 620-331-2690; Pittsburg Office, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education (EFNEP), 620-232-1930. Wildcat District Extension is on the Web at <http://www.wildcatdistrict.ksu.edu>. Or, like our Facebook page at [facebook.com/wildcat.extension.district](https://www.facebook.com/wildcat.extension.district).

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