



Choose healthy fast foods.

CHALLENGE
Avoid typical fast foods and choose healthy fast foods.

Requirements to Complete this WELLNESS CHALLENGE

1. Fast food is typically high in salt, fat, and sugar. Using the suggestions in this Wellness Challenge as your guide, choose healthier quick meals.
2. Record the activity on your monthly **Wellness Challenge Calendar** each day.
3. Read “Healthy foods for people on the go” and “When you do the drive through...”
4. To complete the Challenge, you must choose healthy food and avoid typical fast foods during at least 22 days this month. And, if you do “drive through” for fast food, choose healthier menu items.
5. Keep records of your completed Challenge in case your organization requires documentation.

The problem with fast food

Just what are you eating when you slurp down a shake, nibble a bucket of fries, or munch a cheesy breakfast sandwich? In two words: junk food. The shake provides fat and sugar; the fries add fat and sodium; the breakfast sandwich gives you cholesterol, fat, and sodium. And don't forget the high calories most fast foods contain.

Too much saturated fat and cholesterol increases your risk of heart disease, cancer, overweight, and other health problems. Too much sodium can raise your blood pressure. Sugars and other sweeteners contribute to diabetes, overweight, tooth decay, and other health problems. And the high calories tend to accumulate around your middle!

Research shows that fried foods eaten away from home are largely to blame for expanding waistlines and chronic diseases.



Healthy foods for people on the go

Even with the most hectic schedule, you can make room for more nutritious, low-calorie, and health-protective foods in your diet. Here are a few quick and delicious ideas to get you started.

Breakfasts

- **Blend fresh fruit** into a smoothie with yogurt and ice, pour it into a covered mug, and head out the door!
- **Grab an apple** or **banana**, a handful of almonds, and a **container of orange juice**.
- **Spread nut butter** (such as almond or peanut) on whole-wheat toast and top with banana slices.
- **Scoop up cottage cheese** with sturdy whole-grain chips. Add an easy-to-eat fruit such as apricots or plums for a tasty meal.
- **Top yogurt** with fresh raspberries, blueberries, peach slices, or strawberries. **Stir some granola** or muesli into yogurt for added crunch.

Salads

- **Add fresh peas**, grated carrots, red pepper chunks, or broccoli florets to pasta, potato, tuna, or chicken salad.
- **Perk up deli salads** like coleslaw, chicken, or tuna with apple or pineapple chunks and raisins.
- **Freeze pineapple chunks**, grapes, bananas, and grapes in small-sized sealed baggies for a delicious, crunchy fruit salad.
- Try different combinations for **quick salads**:
 - Tomato, cucumber, and onion slices seasoned with dill and lemon juice
 - Red grapes, pineapple and apple chunks, nectarine pieces, and black walnuts sprinkled with ground flaxseed
 - Corn, black beans, red and green pepper chunks, and diced onions seasoned with cilantro and garlic
 - Baby spinach leaves, cranberries, apple chunks, and walnuts
 - Broccoli and cauliflower pieces, grated carrots, olives, and red onions seasoned with ginger and vegetable oil
 - Orange or grapefruit wedges, pecans, and leaf lettuce sprinkled with sesame seeds and olive oil
 - Black-eyed peas with diced celery, carrots, and peppers, seasoned with cayenne and garlic

Sandwiches

- There's more to a sandwich than just lettuce and tomato.

Add bell pepper rings, cucumber, and avocado slices for texture and taste.

- **Wrap a tortilla** around mashed sweet potato, pecan pieces, chili powder, and mandarin wedges.
- **Fill a whole-wheat tortilla** with garbanzo and kidney beans, onions, garlic, and chili pepper pieces.
- **Fill whole-wheat pocket (pita) bread** with hummus, purple onion, and tomato.
- Of course, you can still **fix the old standby** – peanut butter, jelly, and whole-wheat bread.



Other ideas

- **Sweet potatoes** make an excellent addition to lunch – hot or cold. Simply poke a few holes in the sweet potato with a knife or fork, wrap in a wet paper towel, and microwave until soft enough to eat. Sprinkle with brown sugar or pepper, or store in the fridge till tomorrow for a leftover lunch. They taste good cold!
- **Finger foods** – carrot sticks, whole-grain crackers, broccoli or cauliflower florets, and pea pods – make great “to go” meals.
- **Beans** are incredibly versatile. You can use them as a quick base for soup, drain the beans and add to salads, or mash and season them with plenty of onion and herbs and shape into a patty (either with or without an egg) and braise or bake or fry lightly and use in a sandwich.
- If you're at home or the office, open a can of bean **soup**, add some pre-cooked veggies and onion and warm it in the microwave. Eat with whole-grain crackers or toast, and fruit.

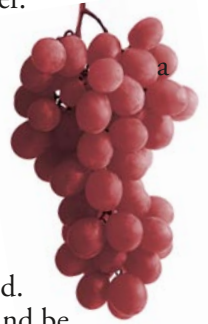
Snacks

- Store **dried fruit and nuts** in your glove compartment or desk drawer to tide you over from meal to meal.
- Many times, drinking a **big glassful of water** can help you get through your hunger pang so you can wait to eat at the next mealtime.

Desserts

Desserts that are good for you can still taste great.

- Core an **apple** without cutting all the way through, fill with raisins, sprinkle with cinnamon and brown sugar, and microwave or bake until soft. One apple packs 4.5 grams of fiber.
- Bake **bananas** until the skin is black. Slice open and sprinkle with brown sugar to yield delicious custard-like treat.
- **Dried fruits** are sweet, without the fat.
- Frozen red or green seedless **grapes** make a tasty, cool, crunchy treat.



When you do the drive through...

Healthy eating doesn't mean you can't ever eat fast food. Just limit yourself to no more than 2 times per week, and be careful what you order.

- **Scout out healthy fast food alternatives**, such as salad bars, smoothie beverage bars, or healthier Asian or Mexican cuisine.
- **Order healthier menu items.** Choose baked potatoes, salads, chicken or turkey breast deli sandwiches, vegetables and rice, fruit salads, toasted whole-grain bagels (hold the cream cheese or butter), or grilled chicken or fish. Some fast food restaurants post the **nutritional content** of their foods. Choose foods in which no more than 30% of the calories come from fat.
- **Ask for any dressing to be “on the side.”** When you get the high-fat sauces or condiments, such as salad dressing and mayonnaise, use them sparingly to reduce calories.
- **Do not “supersize”** unless you plan to split the meal.
- **Skip the soft drink.** Choose unsweetened tea, coffee, or fruit juice – or better yet, drink water with a slice of lemon.
- When you simply must have a fatty food...**Order the smallest size you can** (whether it's French fries or a cookie) and eat it slowly, savoring each bite.

Make it easy...

It helps to have friends who are eating similarly – you'll get ideas from each other, and if you work together, you can eat together somewhere other than a fast food place.

A secret to healthy quick meals is having what you need on-hand. You need a grocery list, a regular once-a-week time to shop, and a handy storage area at home for quick meal items. Your grocery list may need to include quick foods such as pre-cut veggies, fresh fruit chunks, canned beans, and whole-grain crackers and breads.

For more ideas, go to “Inside the Pyramid” www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/index.html. Choose a color. For examples of foods, choose “Learn more” – there are many. The Meals for You website, www.mealsforyou.com/cgi-bin/mealSuperCategory?all includes more than 25 types of quick, healthy meals including vegetarian meals.

Sources:

1. Foulke J. USDHHS Publication No. (FDA) 92-2257. FDA Consumer. US Food and Drug Administration. SmallStep.gov. USDHHS.
2. Taveras EM et al. Association of Consumption of Fried Food Away From Home With Body Mass Index and Diet Quality in Older Children and Adolescents. Pediatrics. Vol. 116 No. 4 [e-article].





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Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Record each day you actually eat healthier foods and avoid fast food.
3. At the end of the month, total the number of days you didn't eat fast food. You must meet this goal at least 22 days during the month to complete the Challenge. Then keep up this healthy practice for a lifetime of good health.
4. Turn in your Wellness Challenge form if requested, or enter your completion of this Challenge on the Health Activity Tracker report for the month, if applicable. Keep this record for evidence of completion.

MONTH:							WC = Wellness Challenge	ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary	
WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>	WC <input type="checkbox"/>		
ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____		
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ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____		

_____ Number of days this week I ate healthy foods instead of fast foods

_____ Number of days this month I got 30+ minutes of physical activity such as brisk walking

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____

