



FAST FOOD ALERT!



Today's families are busy and on the go with work and activities. Children are eating away from home more than ever. Over time, the choices children make at fast food restaurants will have a significant effect on their ability to get the right nutrients in the right amounts for their bodies to grow and develop in a healthy way.

Moderation is key. It's OK to indulge a craving for French fries every now and then, but to stay healthy you can't make it a regular habit. Finding a healthful, well-balanced meal in most fast food restaurants can be a challenge, but there are always choices you can make that are better than others.

AT HOME ACTIVITY

Did you know many fast food restaurants now offer healthful fast food options? Try these ideas next time your family eats out:

- Choose a fruit or vegetable option or yogurt instead of French fries as a side. This will increase your servings of fruits, vegetables or dairy foods
- Remember: Bigger isn't better so don't oversize your meal. It can change it from healthful to hazardous in just a few bites.
- Even better, choose the smallest portion size available or split a meal with a family member.
- Always choose low-fat milk or water with your meal even when eating out.
- Choose items that are grilled and baked over ones that are breaded and fried.

CHOOSE HEALTHY REWARDS

If a child's good behavior is rewarded with sweets or a trip to a fast food restaurant, they may think that these foods are better than healthful foods.

This belief can be hard to break and may last throughout your child's life.

Try these ideas for rewards instead:

- Let him or her have a friend stay overnight.
- Give your child one-on-one time alone with a parent or special adult.
- Take him or her to your local library.
- Give your child a special day at their favorite park or swimming beach.
- Bring him or her to your local farmers market and let them pick out something healthful.

