Fast food has become a major part of life for Americans. Fast food is extremely high in calories, fat and sodium, and is also low in vitamins and minerals. Most foods offered in fast food restaurants contain over 55% of calories from fat.

Often, for just 39 cents more, you can "upsise" your meal and eat even more calories, fat and sodium. "Upsizing" is called value marketing and provides you with more food for less money. This makes more money for food companies. However, the large portion sizes result in overeating and obesity. Large portions of food provide more calories and create larger waist lines. When people are served more food, they usually eat more food.

Fast food is part of the American lifestyle. Make an effort to select healthier foods when eating out. Limit the amount of fried food you eat. Select small hamburgers. Avoid double trouble: double hamburgers and fries lead to even more calories and fat. Choose a healthy drink for your meal such as water or milk.

There are healthy food items available in fast food restaurants. The bottom line is you need to make healthier choices when eating out.
GET MOVING . . .
A fast food meal is usually a hamburger, french fries and a soft drink. Eating this meal gives you about 1025 calories. The body must use the calories that it consumes in order to keep from gaining weight. How much activity does it take to burn the calories in a fast food meal? A 155 - pound person would have to:

Walk moderately for 4 hours 12 minutes
Ride a bike leisurely for 2 hours 36 minutes
Swim leisurely for 2 hours 24 minutes
Run at 5 mph for 1 hour and 48 minutes

If you SUPERSIZE your fast food meal, you have to SUPERSIZE your exercise!

DID YOU KNOW . . . ?

✓ One out of every three meals is eaten out.
✓ 200 fast food hamburgers are eaten per second.
✓ Larger portions provide more calories.
✓ When people are served more food, they eat more food.
✓ 67% of people report eating their entire entrée all or most of the time when dining out.
✓ A typical fast food meal has 1025 calories and 43 grams of fat.
✓ The amount of fat in the average fast food meal is equal to 3 1/2 tablespoons of butter.
✓ Sauces, dressings and toppings add lots of hidden calories and fat.

TIPS FOR IMPROVING YOUR FAST FOOD CHOICES

♦ Select plain hamburgers or chicken sandwiches that have been baked, broiled or grilled.

♦ Avoid adding cheese, sauces, or dressing to your sandwich. They are usually loaded with saturated fat and cholesterol.

♦ Choose low fat dressings for salads, and use less than the entire packet. There is usually more than one serving in each packet.

♦ When eating a baked potato, ask for the toppings on the side and add only small amounts yourself.

♦ Drink water or milk with your meal.

♦ Mix up your menu some! Avoid the traditional burger, fries and soft drink.
FAMILY ACTIVITY

Turn a fast-food night into a family night. Order only your main menu items (hamburger, chicken sandwich, etc.) from the restaurant and take them home with you. Have family members join one another in making the side dishes. Try mashed potatoes, corn on the cob, green beans, fruit salad or another combination of vegetable or fruit. Enjoy sharing mealtime with your family as you make a meal on the go much healthier.

CLIP AND COOK

Apple Salad

4 apples, any variety, chopped
1 cup raisins
1 cup celery, chopped
1 cup low-fat vanilla yogurt
1/2 cup sunflower seeds

1. Mix apples, raisins and celery in a bowl.
2. Gently stir in yogurt.
3. Sprinkle sunflower seeds over top of salad.
4. Refrigerate until ready to serve.