

Fast Food Fix

Target Audience:

Adults

Topic Areas:

Fast Foods Can Be Healthy

When the participants eat at a fast food restaurant they will:

- select low-fat options.
- limit foods that are high in sugar.
- ask for foods to be made with less salt, for example request French fries without salt.
- use less of condiments that are high in salt, like ketchup, pickled foods, mustard and soy sauce.
- taste food before adding salt.

If body weight is an issue:

- select reduced-Calorie foods

Fast Food Fix

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Funding For The Development Of This Lesson Was Provided By:

Fiscal Year 2002 & 2003 New Jersey Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program and Fiscal Year 2007, 2009, 2011, 2012 New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - Education

Purpose:

The purpose of this lesson is to practice making healthy fast food choices using MyPyramid as a guide.

What The Nutrition Educator Needs To Know So That Participants' Questions Can Be Answered:

When you are busy with work or other activities, you may choose to eat out. Other times it is just fun to eat out. It can be hard to make healthy choices when eating out because you cannot control how food is made. Research has shown that meals you eat out tend to be higher in Calories, fat and salt than meals prepared at home. Meals made away from home also tend to have fewer vitamins, minerals and fiber.¹

Fast food restaurants are very popular places to go to when eating out. Often, people eat at fast food restaurants because it is quick and easy and the food tastes good. But, many foods from fast restaurants are high in Calories, fat, sugar and salt. For example, a ¼ pound burger sandwich with cheese, a large order of French Fries and a medium cola soft drink have 1225 Calories, 48 grams of fat, 1759 mg (milligrams) of salt and 65 grams of sugar.² Some studies show that

¹ J.F. Guthrie, B.H. Lin, and E. Frazao, "Role of Food Prepared Away From Home in the American Diet, 1977-78 versus 1994-96: changes and consequences," Journal of Nutrition Education & Behavior 34(3) (2002): 140-150.

² Based on an average of comparable meals from Burger King, McDonald's and Wendy's. (2002) 15 January 2003 <<http://www.burgerking.com/Food/nutrition/NutritionalTable/downloads/menuitem.pdf>>; <<http://www.mcdonalds.com/countries/usa/food/nutrition/categories/nutrition/index.jsp>>; <http://www.wendys.com/nutrition_guide.pdf>

people who go to fast food places often eat more Calories and fat, which can contribute to obesity.^{3,4,5}

If the fast food meal described above is compared to MyPyramid, many of the foods like the French fries are found at the top of their MyPyramid food group with the other less healthy foods high in added fat and added sugar. Many of the toppings on the burger and the cola soft drink are very high in fat and added sugar as well which means, they are not the best choice. Also, the meat is often not lean and would be in the middle of the Meat and Beans Food Group, not at the bottom with lower fat, leaner types of meat. The cheese can be made with whole milk, which would add to the fat in this meal and make this food higher up in the Milk group. Only the bun, lettuce and tomato are at the bottom of their MyPyramid Food Groups. Remember, to eat a healthier diet, more of your foods should come from the bottom of the Pyramid than the top.

Eating more Calories, fat, sugar and salt than your body needs can increase your risk of or worsen:

- heart disease
- obesity
- high blood pressure (hypertension)
- stroke
- high cholesterol
- diabetes
- certain cancers

Make healthier choices when eating out to lesson your risk of getting these diseases or of making them worse if you already have them.

Also, limit how often you eat out at fast food places to help lower the amount of Calories, fat, sugar and salt in what you eat.

Limiting Fat And Calories When Eating Fast Food

Eating large amounts of high-fat foods has been linked to heart disease and certain cancers. In general, foods that come from animals, like dairy foods and meats, are higher in fat than foods that come from plants. Too much fat, especially saturated

³ S.A. French, L. Harnack, and R.W. Jeffery, "Fast Food Restaurant Use Among Women in the Pound of Prevention Study: Dietary, Behavioral, and Demographic Correlates," International Journal of Obesity & Related Metabolic Disorders 24(10) (2000): 1353-1359.

⁴ J.K. Binkley, J. Eales and M. Jekanowski, "The Relation Between Dietary Change and Rising US Obesity." International Journal of Obesity & Related Metabolic Disorders 24(8) (2000): 1032-1039.

⁵ S.A. French, M. Story, D. Neumark-Sztainer, J.A. Fulkerson and P. Hannan, "Fast Food Restaurant Use Among Adolescents: Associations with Nutrient Intake, Food Choices and Behavioral and Psychosocial Variables," International Journal of Obesity & Related Metabolic Disorders 25(12) (2001): 1823-1833.

fat and trans fat from food raises cholesterol levels in blood vessels and may cause arteries to become clogged. The American Heart Association now recommends that you only have 1% of your total calories per day from trans fat. This means if you eat 2000 Calories each day, you should not have more than 2 grams of trans fats a day.⁶ When the arteries become clogged, the risk for heart disease, stroke and high blood pressure increases.

Foods that are high in fat are also high in Calories. A Calorie is a unit that stands for the amount of energy that the body gets from foods. The Calories you eat give you energy to keep you moving. When people eat more Calories in a day than they use in their daily activities, they gain weight. For example, if you eat 2500 Calories in 1 day but only use 2000 Calories that day, that's an extra 500 Calories that will be stored as fat. About 3500 Calories equals 1 pound. So if you eat an extra 500 Calories each day for 7 days, you may gain 1 pound in that 7 days. If you did this for a year, you would gain 52 extra pounds in that year.! Foods that are mostly fat have about 2 times more Calories for their weight than foods that are mostly made of carbohydrates or proteins.

There are many things that go into knowing the amount of fat and Calories you should eat each day. The chart on page 7 gives ranges for fat and Calories that are healthy for most people. If you are very tall or short, are very athletic or have a serious medical condition, the amount of fat and Calories you should eat may vary. If you need to know more exact amounts, check with your doctor or a dietitian. Also, log on to www.mypyramid.gov to determine your personal MyPyramid Plan.

Do not let your meals weigh you down! Cut the extra fat and Calories from your meals by following these tips:

- Order smaller portions.
- Ask the people who work at the restaurant for a nutrition facts' guide and look for menu items that are lower in Calories. Ask about low-fat and low-Calorie menu items.
- Share large portions with someone. Or, before you begin your meal, divide the meal in half and take part of it to go in a bag or box for a second snack or meal.
- Limit the amount of French fries, onion rings, hash browns and fruit pies you eat. These items are found at the top of their MyPyramid Food Groups with other foods high in fat and added sugar. They can be very high in Calories.
- If ordering French fries, ask if you can get them without salt.
- Limit high-fat toppings, like cheese, sour cream, butter or margarine, mayonnaise, gravy and salad dressings. Toppings are a major reason that food

⁶ American Heart Association, "Trans Fat." Available at: <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3045792>. Accessed 6/16/09.

items like salads and chicken and fish sandwiches turn into high-fat choices. Try using small amounts of ketchup and mustard or slices of onion, tomato and lettuce on your sandwiches and ask about low-fat dressings for your salad.

- Eat foods plain, like a plain hamburger without cheese and toppings, or get the toppings on the side and put on a small amount. Load up on veggies instead for more flavor.
- Look for broiled or baked items instead of fried items.
- Remove visible fat and skin from meat and poultry.
- Order more vegetables on your pizza instead of sausage, pepperoni or extra cheese.
- Try low-fat or fat-free milk, cheese, ice cream and yogurt.
- Ask the restaurant if they prepare any dishes using egg whites instead of whole eggs. For example, you can ask if they make a breakfast sandwich or omelet with egg whites.
- Order low-fat breakfast foods. Have hot and cold cereals, yogurt and fruits. Cut back on high-fat foods like sausage, bacon and hash browns.
- Replace high-fat foods like doughnuts and deep-fried fat foods with low-fat foods that are baked.

Limiting Sugar When Eating Fast Food

Most people love sweet foods and drinks. Adding sugar is the main way we make foods sweet. Sugar adds Calories, promotes tooth decay and has very few nutrients. Sugar gives the body energy but it does not have any vitamins or minerals. Many foods that are high in sugar, like soft drinks, cookies, doughnuts and fruit pies are also high in Calories. Watch out for high-sugar foods and drinks that have few other nutrients. These foods are found at the top of their MyPyramid food groups.

Read nutrition facts guides to learn the sugar content and the Calories in foods before you choose them. Your goal should be to eat mostly low-sugar foods and to eat high-sugar foods less often. Many low-fat foods are high in sugars. Sugars are added to make up for the flavor change that comes when the fat is taken out of some foods. Eating too many high-sugar, low-nutrient foods can crowd out more healthy foods and drinks.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends that you make choices to avoid eating too much sugar.⁷ The most added sugar you should have in a day is shown on the chart on page 7.

⁷ United States Department of Agriculture. [2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/default.htm). 6th ed. Available at: <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/default.htm>. Accessed June 4, 2008.

When eating at fast food places, look out for high-sugar foods and drinks that have few other nutrients. Here are some tips on how to avoid sticky sugar situations at fast food places:

- Say NO to larger sized meals! A larger sized soft drink has twice as much sugar as a medium drink!
- Order orange juice, low-fat milk or water in place of soft drinks and fruit-flavored drinks that are high in sugar.
- Limit the amount of regular soft drinks and fruit-flavored drinks you order. They are made mostly of sugar and water, not fruit juice. If it has the words “drink,” “punch” or “soda” in the title, it is not 100% fruit juice and does not count as a serving of fruit.
- Order diet soft drinks and flavor coffees and teas with sugar substitutes like saccharin, aspartame, acesulfame-K and sucralose (Splenda). These substitutes provide a sweet taste with few or no Calories. They are good to use in place of table sugar if you want the sweet taste without the Calories.

Limiting Salt When Eating Fast Food

Adults should eat no more than 2300 mg of salt per day. This is about 1 teaspoon of salt. Most Americans eat almost 1 ½ times that amount every day.⁸ If you add salt to your foods over a long period of time, it may not taste as strong. Over time, you may need to keep adding more salt to get the same taste..

Often salt is added to foods when they are cooked and when they are processed. Many people add extra salt after cooking foods by sprinkling salt on foods at the table for the taste. Sauces high in salt, such as ketchup, relish or soy sauce are also added to foods.

Too much salt can lead to health problems. If you eat more than the recommended daily amount of salt over a long period of time, you may increase your risk for high blood pressure. High blood pressure is another name for hypertension. Arteries carry blood from your heart to the rest of your body. When the pressure of the blood flowing inside your arteries is too high, you have high blood pressure. High blood pressure can lead to strokes, heart attacks, heart failure and kidney failure.

Most nutrition facts’ guides, from fast food restaurants, list the amount of salt found in a food as sodium in mg. Keep in mind that you should not eat more than 2300 mg of salt per day.

⁸ [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, March 27, 2009, 58/11:281. http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm5811.pdf >](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm5811.pdf).

Use your “salt-smarts” when eating out at fast food places.

- Say NO to larger sized meals!
- Taste foods before adding salt.
- Look on nutrition facts guides for menu items that are lower in salt.
- Be clear about how you want your food prepared. Ask for your food to be made without salt or with less salt. For example, ask the server to give you fries from a new batch before they add the salt.
- Choose vegetables and salads. French fries and onion rings do not count as a vegetable.

Tools for Making Healthier Choices When Eating At Fast Food Places

The Ranges Of Calories, Fat, And The Most Sugar And Salt You Should Eat Each Day Chart

Most people should not eat more than the amounts listed below for fat, sugar and salt. These amounts are based on how many Calories you should eat each day and depend on your size and activity level.

The Ranges Of Calories And Fat, And The Most Sugar And Salt You Should Eat Each Day⁹:			
	Active Men	Most Men/Active Women	Most Women/Older Adults
Calories	2600-2800	2000-2200	1600-1800
Fat	58-109 g*	44-86 g	36-70 g
Sugar	16-18 tsp [△] or 64-72 g	10-12 tsp or 40-48 g	6-8 tsp or 24-32 g
Salt	2300 mg	2300 mg	2300 mg

Find out where you fit on the chart and keep your goals for Calories, fat, sugar and salt in mind when you make fast food choices.

Nutrition Facts’ guides

Fast food restaurants offer many choices. Many places sell salads, baked potatoes, pita wraps and baked or grilled chicken sandwiches. These choices are healthier than cheeseburgers, French fries and fried chicken sandwiches. But, some choices that seem healthier can still be high in fat if they have high-fat toppings. Some high-fat toppings are mayonnaise, salad dressing, sour cream, special sauces,

⁹ Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Dept of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005. Accessed April 1, 2009
<http://www.health.gov/DietaryGuidelines/dga2005/document/default.htm> .

* g = grams; “g” is what you will see on the “Nutrition Facts” label.

△ tsp = teaspoons; “tsp” is what you will not see on the “Nutrition Facts” label.

cheese and bacon. You cannot always tell if a food is a healthy choice just by looking at the name or the food. A good tool to help you make better choices is a nutrition facts' guide.

Most restaurants have a nutrition facts' guide they will give you. You may also be able to get a nutrition facts' guide on the internet or by mail. These guides can help you compare choices to look for foods that are lower in Calories, fat, sugar and salt and higher in vitamins, minerals and fiber. The list below gives common information found in guides.

- Serving size
- Calories
- Total fat
- Saturated fat
- Sodium
- Carbohydrates
- Fiber
- Protein
- Calcium
- Iron
- Vitamin A
- Vitamin C

MyPyramid

MyPyramid is another tool you can use to help make healthier choices at fast food places. It serves as a general guide for choosing a healthy diet that is right for you and meets your dietary needs. MyPyramid calls for:

1. eating foods from all the food groups; and
2. eating a variety of different foods from each group.

These 2 things will help you get the nutrients your body needs and help you maintain a healthy weight. Your MyPyramid plan gives you the amount of food from each food group that you should eat each day. Your personal plan depends on how many Calories you need. Calories are a way to measure the amount of energy that is in food. The energy your body needs depends on your age, sex, height and weight and how active you are. See where you fit in on the chart on page 7.

Use MyPyramid to plan your meals for the day even when you eat at fast food places. Choose foods mostly from the bottom of each food group to meet your daily nutrition needs. For example, if you order 100% fruit juice from the menu, you will see that depending on its size, it may count as either 1 or 2 cups of fruit. Do not forget that you should eat sparingly food that is found at the top of each food group that are high in added sugars and fat.

People often misplace certain foods on MyPyramid thinking that the foods are healthier than they really are. You may think that fried mozzarella sticks are okay because they are part of the Dairy Group and fried okra is okay because it is part of the Vegetable Group. But, when most of a food's Calories come from fat or sugar like fried foods, they are at the top of the food group and are not the best choice. Some other examples are French fries that have most of their Calories from fat, and fruit pie where most of the Calories come from sugar and fat. Some other examples are:

- Danish pastry
- Hash brown potatoes
- Onion rings
- Most fried chicken pieces, like wings and popcorn chicken
- Fried fish
- Doughnuts
- Fried okra
- Potato skins
- Most coleslaws, potato and macaroni salads

Bringing It All Together

Make healthy fast food choices by using a nutrition facts guide. See which menu items are lower in Calories, fat, sugar and salt. Be sure to keep in mind your personal Calories, fat, sugar and salt goals from the chart on page 7.

Add a salad and a glass of orange juice or low-fat milk to add nutrients to your meal. A salad full of vegetables is high in fiber and vitamins A and C. A 12 oz (ounce) glass of orange juice counts as 1 ½ cups from the Fruit Group. Milk is high in calcium and vitamin D. Order 1% low-fat or non-fat milk instead of soft drinks, which are high in sugar, Calories and caffeine.

Making healthier choices at fast food places can be as easy as 1,2,3.

1. Know where this meal fits into your overall eating goals for the day. See the chart on page 7 to know what your goals should be.
2. Use nutrition facts guides to make choices by choosing to lower Calories, fat, sugar and salt in foods.
3. Spread your food choices across all of the food groups according to your MyPyramid plan. Do not eat more oils than are in your plan.

For Additional Reading:

“Smart Food Choices - Eating Out: Finding Healthier Choices.” Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension, 2.20.2007. Available at:

<http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=FS1059>

American Heart Association. 2008.

“Tips for Eating Out.” Available at:

<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4471>

“Make Health Food Choices.” Available at:

<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=537>

Fast Food Fix

Main Themes:

Nutrition & Diet

Cooking & Food Storage

Shopping

Budgeting

Safety & Sanitation

Materials Needed

Activity 1:

MyPyramid poster, laminated

Tape

Thick markers

4” x 6” index cards

Reusable adhesive

Food cards (To make, see next page.)

Activity 2:

The Ranges Of Calories And Fat, And The Most Sugar And Salt You Should Eat Each Day poster

Fat, sugar, Calorie and salt expert pins (if you like) (To make, see next page.)

Expanded fat tube set (To make, see next page.)

1 teaspoon measuring spoon

About 3 cups sand in a plastic container

21 oz (ounces) soft drink cup, from a fast food restaurant

Large 42 oz soft drink cup, from a fast food restaurant

Medium-sized French fries container, from a fast food restaurant

Large French fries container, from a fast food restaurant

2 clear plastic cups

If no chalkboard or white board in room, large flipchart of white paper or poster board

2 easily seen colors of chalk or markers

Phone number of local diabetes association

Activity 3:

Additional My Pyramid poster

Materials from Activity #1

Handouts

Cut The Salt When Eating Fast Food/Cut The Sugar When Eating Fast Food—1 of each per participant (if you like)

Cut The Fat When Eating Fast Food—1 per participant (if you like)

Preparation Needed Prior To Lesson:

The Ranges Of Calories And Fat, And The Most Sugar And Salt You Should Eat Each Day poster

1. On a disk, save the page with the **The Ranges Of Calories And Fat, And The Most Sugar And Salt You Should Eat Each Day** poster.
2. Go to a local print shop that is capable of printing poster-size documents and have a poster made. You may wish to have it laminated so that you can use it many times.
3. If you have a copier that can enlarge this table to 11 x 17 print it and laminate it and use it instead.

Fat, Sugar, Calorie and Salt Expert pins (if you like)

4 blank name tags

1 marker that is thick and writes in a dark color

1. Use the marker to write in large letters the word Fat Expert on a blank name tag.
2. Repeat for Sugar Expert, Salt Expert and Calorie Expert.

Food Cards

1. Print out the food cards, found on pages 14-18, and cut them along the lines.
2. Laminate the cards.
3. You will use the blank index cards to write in foods that your participants eat that are not included in the lesson cards.

Expanded Fat Tube Set

Test tubes with tops

Test tube holder

White bath soap bars or shortening

Small heatproof bowl or pot

Hot plate

1 medicine dropper with ml markers

Glue

1. Get a box of test tubes.
2. Place test tubes in sturdy upright position in test tube holder.
3. Cut soap into small pieces and melt in a small heatproof bowl or pot on a hot plate. If using shortening, melt in same way.
4. Fill the medicine dropper with 1 ml of soap or shortening.
5. Place the dropper inside of a test tube. Try not to touch the sides of the test tube with the tip of the dropper.
6. Squeeze the 1 ml of soap or shortening into the test tube. Try to avoid getting any on the sides of the test tube.
7. Repeat steps 4-6 with the appropriate amount of soap or shortening according to the chart below. Keep in mind you will be increasing the amount of soap or shortening that you place in the test tubes. Be sure to keep the soap or shortening warm enough to easily fill the dropper, until all of the test tubes are made.
8. Set the test tube aside to cool. The soap or shortening will harden in the test tube. Keep the test tubes in order so that you can easily label the amount in each tube. Do not label until all of the test tubes have been filled.
9. Clean off any soap or shortening that is splashed on the sides of the test tube using a long cotton swab and warm water.
10. Neatly glue tops on all of the test tubes.
11. Label the amount of soap or shortening in each tube. Each ml (milliliter) of soap or shortening is equal to about 1 gram of fat.
12. Cover labels with clear tape to protect from hands, moisture and age.
13. Make enough fat tubes to show the food item with the highest amount of fat.

Amount of soap or shortening to be put in each tube	Amount of fat in milliliters (ml)	Number of tubes to be made of each amount
0 grams (empty tube)	0	1 tube
1 gram	1	1 tube
2 grams	2	1 tube
3 grams	3	1 tube
4 grams	4	1 tube
5 grams	5	1 tube
6 grams	6	1 tube
7 grams	7	1 tube
8 grams	8	1 tube
9 grams	9	1 tube
10 grams*	10	7 tubes

*To show an amount of fat in foods that are greater than 10 grams, add as many tubes as needed. For example, if you are showing the amount of fat in a

CHEESEBURGER, you will show $27 \text{ g} = 10 \text{ g} + 10 \text{ g} + 7 \text{ g}$. You will need 3 tubes to present this dish: 2 tubes holding 10 grams of fat and 1 tube with 7g.

Time The Activity Is Expected To Take:

Before You Begin: 2 - 5 minutes

Activity 1: 30 minutes

Activity 2: 30 minutes

Activity 3: 15 - 20 minutes

Next Week's Goals: 5 minutes

Sausage

Egg

Bacon

Biscuit

English Muffin

Hash Brown Potatoes

Doughnut

Bagel

Taco Shell

Taco Meat

**Taco or Sandwich
Veggies**

**Taco or Sandwich
Veggies**

Cheese Slice

Cheese Slice

Hamburger

Hot Dog

Bun

Bun

Coffee

Cream

Sugar

Mayonnaise

Ketchup

Mustard

Soft Drink

Soft Drink

French Fries

Rice

Mac & Cheese

Fried Chicken

Fast Food Fix

Lesson Plan:

Before You Begin: (2 - 5 minutes)

1. Roll about 30 small balls of reusable adhesive. You will use these in both activities 1 and 3 for sticking the index cards to the MyPyramid posters.
2. Lay food cards out in rows so that they can be easily found.
3. Tape 2 laminated MyPyramid posters up on a chalkboard or a wall in the front of the room before class. You will want to refer to the posters during the lesson.
4. Ask the participants if they worked on their goals from the last lesson. Ask them which goals they worked on and how or what they did to work on them. Try to get people to tell the class what they did. If they did not work on the goals, ask them to work on them before the next class.
5. Tell the participants what the objectives are for today's lesson.

Activity 1: How Does Fast Food Stack Up? (30 minutes)

1. Tell the class that today you will be taking a look at fast foods; how they fit into MyPyramid; and how different choices affect Calories, fat, sugar and salt intake.
2. Begin a discussion about fast food by asking the class:
 - Why do you eat at fast food restaurants?

Answers will vary. Participants may eat out when:

- *they do not want to cook*
 - *they do not have the time to cook*
 - *they or their children want fast food*
 - *they go out with friends*
- What have you done to try to make healthy choices when you order at fast food restaurants?

Answers will vary. It is all right if they laugh or say they have never tried to make healthy choices at fast food places.

- What makes some fast foods less healthy choices?

Answers will vary. Some participants may say foods can be unhealthy because of the way they are cooked, or because they sit out too long, or other food safety related comments. If participants bring up food safety issues, tell them that these are concerns, but in today's lesson we will be focusing on more and less healthy food choices.

3. Ask for 3 volunteers who would be willing to describe to the group their favorite fast food meal. You will need 1 volunteer willing to describe his or her favorite breakfast, 1 volunteer willing to describe his or her favorite lunch, and 1 volunteer willing to describe his or her favorite dinner.
4. Have the 1st volunteer name all the foods in his or her favorite fast food breakfast. You do not need to ask about serving sizes like you do when you collect a diet recall, but you do need to ask about what condiments, toppings, or other things might be on each food or part of the meal. Use thick markers to record each food or ingredient on a separate index card. If the participant names a food that is listed on a food card, use the food card to save some time.

For example, if a participant eats a breakfast sandwich value meal, the bun, egg, cheese and sausage each should be written on separate cards. Cards would also be made for the hash brown potatoes and coffee or juice. If the participant eats 2 hash brown potatoes, each hash brown should be written on a separate card. Make sure you make separate cards for each topping even if there are several on a sandwich. For example, ketchup, mustard and mayonnaise should each have their own cards. Lettuce, tomatoes and pickles for a single sandwich should be on 1 card. Each item alone does not count as a vegetable serving.

5. Have the 2nd volunteer describe his or her favorite fast food lunch. As he or she lists each food, record each food or ingredient on an index card or use a food card as you did in step 4.
6. Repeat step 5 for the 3rd volunteer's dinner.
7. Place a piece of reusable adhesive on the back of each index card. While doing this, read each food item that was named in steps 4-6 aloud and place it in the right group on the MyPyramid poster at the bottom, middle or top of the group depending on the food and how much added sugar and fat it has. Fried foods and sugary drinks and desserts go at the top.
8. Once all the cards are placed on the poster, ask the class for comments. It is likely that many of the foods will be at the top of the Pyramid.

Make sure the following points are discussed.

- *Few fast food items come from the bottom of each food groups Foods from the bottom of each food group should make up most of your diet.*
 - *Some foods, like French fries, apple pies, and fruit punch even though they are in the fruit and veggie group have most of their Calories from fat and sugar. Also, if a drink is made with mostly sugar and contains no or very little real fruit juice, then it also belongs at the top of the Pyramid Food Group. If it says 100% fruit juice, then it can count toward your fruit for the day depending on the size. It is recommended that most of your fruit choices come from whole or cut-up fruit rather than juice.*
 - *Many foods served in fast food restaurants belong at the top of MyPyramid. This means that you end up eating a lot of Calories, fat, sugar and salt when you eat them.*
9. Remind the class to keep MyPyramid in mind when making fast food choices. Tell them that during the rest of the lesson you would like them to be thinking about foods they would be willing to eat from the bottom of the Grains, Fruits, and Vegetables groups and foods from the top they would be willing to give up. .
 10. Leave the MyPyramid poster from this activity hanging. It will be referred to in Activity 3.

Activity 2: Supersizing: What's the Deal? (30 minutes)

1. Hang **The Ranges Of Calories And Fat, And The Most Sugar And Salt You Should Eat Each Day** poster on the board or a wall at the front of the room and tell participants that during this next activity you will work with them to take a look at "value meals," "large size servings" and how these "deals" affect their diets.
2. Use the chart to show participants that the Calories you need each day depend on your age, physical activity level and if you are male or female.
3. Show participants that the most or maximum amount of fat and sugar a person should have is related to the amount of Calories he or she should eat. If a participant wants to know the exact amount he or she should eat, say that he or she needs to check with a doctor or a dietitian.
4. Point out the amount of salt a person should eat each day. Ask participants what they notice about the salt column of the chart. Pause a moment. Tell participants that the amount of salt they should each day is 2300 mg (milligrams) for everyone, no matter their age, gender or activity level.

5. Help the class pick their column on the chart by asking participants how physically active they are each day, meaning if they exercise or move around a lot. Tell the class that once they have picked the column that best fits them, the chart shows ranges of Calories and fat and the most sugar and salt they should eat in a day.
6. Create a meal chart on the board or flip chart that looks like this. Make sure the blocks are big enough to hold 2 sets of numbers each.

	Fat	Sugar	Calories	Salt
Regular Meal				
Large Meal				

7. Put the 21 oz cup and medium French fry container on the table for the group to see. Leave the containers there for the rest of the activity.
8. Tell the class that you are going to take a look at a fast food "value" meal. You will use as an example, a meal that includes 2 all beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles and onions on a bun. The meal also comes with a medium order of French fries and a medium soft drink. Pause a moment. The class will probably laugh. Ask the group if any of them have ever had a meal like this.

Show of hands.

9. If possible, pick a volunteer who has had a meal like this. If not, ask for a volunteer who thinks he or she knows a lot about fat in food. Have the volunteer come up to the table. Give him or her the "Fat Expert" pin.
10. Ask the "Fat Expert" to use the fat tubes to show how much fat he or she thinks is in the whole meal. Let the "Fat Expert" know that he or she can use more than 1 tube to show the amount. Have him or her hold up the test tube(s) for the class to see.

11. Ask the class who likes to eat large sized meals.

Show of hands.

12. Tell the class that the larger meal has a large order of French fries and a soft drink that is 1 ½ times as big as those in the regular value meal. Place the 32 oz cup and large French fries container next to the other container on the table to show them the sizes. Leave these containers here for the rest of the activity.

13. Now ask the “Fat Expert” to use the fat tubes to show how much more fat he or she thinks is in the large sized meal. Keep the extra fat tubes separate from the first set.
14. Ask the class if they agree with the number of fat tubes the “Fat Expert” chose for the regular and the large sized meals. Let them comment and add or take away fat tubes. Have the “Fat Expert” adjust the amount as needed. Write the total amount of fat the class agrees on for both the regular meal and the larger sized meals on the chart in the fat column.
15. Tell participants you are now going to look at sugar in fast food meals. Tell participants that most of the sugar in this fast food meal is in the drink, but that there is some sugar in the other foods in the meal.
16. Let participants know that you will be using sand to represent sugar. Using sand instead of real sugar will help avoid problems with ants and other insects. Plus, if it gets wet, it will not get sticky. Explain that 1 level teaspoon of sand = 4 grams of sugar. Using the teaspoon measuring spoon and sand, show them what 1 level teaspoon of sand looks like.
17. Have a volunteer come up to the table. Give him or her the “Sugar Expert” pin. Have the “Sugar Expert” use the teaspoon to measure how much sugar he or she thinks is in the meal. Ask him or her to count aloud as he or she adds the teaspoons of sand to the clear plastic cup.
18. Now have the “Sugar Expert” use the teaspoon to measure how much more sugar he or she thinks is in a larger sized meal. Ask the “Sugar Expert” to count aloud as he or she adds the teaspoons of sand to a second clear plastic cup.
19. Ask the class if they agree with the amounts the “Sugar Expert” chose for the regular and the large sized meals. Let them comment and add or take away teaspoons of sugar. Have the “Sugar Expert” adjust the amount as needed. Write the number of teaspoons of sugar the class agrees on for both the regular meal and the large sized meals on the chart under the sugar column.
20. Ask for a 3rd volunteer. Give him or her the “Calorie Expert” pin. Have the “Calorie Expert” guess how many Calories are in the whole meal.
21. Have the “Calorie Expert” guess how many more Calories are in the large sized meal.
22. Ask the class if they agree with the amounts the “Calorie Expert” chose for the regular and the large sized meals. Let them comment and add or take away Calories. Have the “Calorie Expert” write the final numbers of Calories the

class agrees on for both the regular meal and the large sized meals on the chart under the Calorie column.

23. Ask for a 4th volunteer. Give him or her the “Salt Expert” pin. Have the “Salt Expert” guess how much salt is in the whole meal.
24. Have the “Salt Expert” guess how much more salt is in the large sized meal.
25. Ask the class if they agree with the amounts the “Salt Expert” chose for the regular and the larger sized meals. Let them comment and add or take away mg of salt. Have the “Salt Expert” write the final numbers of mg of salt the class agrees on for both the regular meal and the large sized meals on the chart under the salt column.
26. Tell the class that you are now going to reveal the actual amounts of fat, sugar, Calories and salt in the regular value meal and the larger sized meal.
27. Tell the participants that the real amount of fat in the regular value meal is about 48 g (grams).¹⁰ Have the “Fat Expert” either add more fat tubes or take away fat tubes to get 48 g. You will show $48\text{ g} = 10\text{ g} + 10\text{ g} + 10\text{ g} + 10\text{ g} + 4\text{ g}$. You will need 5 tubes to present this meal: 4 tubes holding 10 grams of fat and 1 tube with 8 g. Using a different color chalk or marker, write the actual amount of fat on the chart, next to the guessed amount.
28. Tell the participants that the real amount of fat in the large sized meal is about 54 g (grams).¹¹ Have the “Fat Expert” either add more fat tubes or take away fat tubes to get 54 g. Using a different color chalk or marker, write the actual amount of fat on the chart, next to the guessed amount.
29. Congratulate the class if they guessed the right amount or were close to the right amount of fat in the regular and/or large sized meals. If they did not guess right, ask if they were surprised by the amount of fat.
30. Tell the class the real amount of sugar in the regular value meal is about 67 g.¹² Remind the class that 4 grams of sugar = 1 level teaspoon of sand. Using a different color chalk or marker, write the actual amount of sugar on the chart, next to the guessed amount.
31. Tell the class the real amount of sugar in the large sized meal is about 95 g.¹² Using a different color chalk or marker, write the actual amount of sugar on the chart, next to the guessed amount.

¹⁰ McDonald’s, “McDonald’s USA Nutrition Facts” 4 April 2009
http://www.mcdonalds.com/countries/usa/food/nutrition_facts/index.html.

¹¹ McDonald’s

¹²⁻¹⁶ McDonald’s

32. Congratulate the class if they guessed the right amount or were close to the right amount of sugar in the regular and/or large sized meals. If they did not guess right, ask if they were surprised by the amount of sugar.
33. Tell the class the real amount of Calories in the regular value meal is about 1130.¹³ Have the “Calorie Expert” use a different colored chalk or marker to write this new number on the chart, next to the guessed amount.
34. Tell the class the real amount of Calories in the larger sized meal is about 1350.¹⁴ Have the “Calorie Expert” use a different colored chalk or marker to write this new number on the chart, next to the guessed amount.
35. Congratulate the class if they guessed the right amount or were close to the right amount of Calories in the regular and/or larger sized meals. If they did not guess right, ask if they were surprised by the amount of Calories.
36. Tell the class the real amount of salt in the regular value meal is about 1368 mg.¹⁵ Have the “Salt Expert” use a different colored chalk or marker to write this new number on the chart, next to the guessed amount.
37. Tell the class that the real amount of salt in the large sized meal is about 1476 mg.¹⁶ Have the “Salt Expert” use a different colored chalk or marker to write this number on the chart, next to the guessed amount.
38. Congratulate the class if they guessed the right amount or were close to the right amount of salt in the regular and/or large sized meals. If they did not guess right, ask if they were surprised by the amount of salt.
39. Have participants look at the **The Ranges Of Calories And Fat, And The Most Sugar And Salt You Should Eat Each Day** poster and the meal chart on the board or flip chart. Ask participants:
 - How does this meal fit into the range of fat and Calories and the most sugar and salt you should have in a day?

Answers will vary. This will depend on the number of calories that someone eats each day and the amount of calories that come from fat, and sugar.

CALORIES

Be sure to let participants know that the regular meal includes almost 2/3 to 3/4 of the Calories that most women and older adults should eat in a day. The large sized meal has 3/4 to almost all of the Calories most women and older adults should eat in a day.

The regular meal is more than 1/2 of the calories active women and most men should eat in a day and the large sized meal approximately 2/3 of what they should eat in a day.

The regular meal is a little less than half of the calories most active men should eat in a day and the large sized meal is about 1/2 what active men should eat in a day.

Here are similar comparisons for fat, sugar and salt and for other groups.

FAT

Be sure to let participants know that the regular meal includes a little less than 3/4 to 1 1/3 times the fat that most women and older adults should eat in a day. The large sized meal has a little more than 3/4 to 1 1/2 times the fat most women and older adults should eat in a day.

The regular meal is more than 1/2 to almost all the fat active women and most men should eat in a day and the large sized meal is approximately 2/3 to almost 1 1/3 of the fat they should eat in a day.

The regular meal is a little less than half to a little more than 3/4 of the fat active men should eat in a day and the large sized meal is about 1/2 to almost all the fat active men should eat in a day.

Sugar

Be sure to let participants know that the regular meal includes almost 2-3 times the sugar that most women and older adults should eat in a day. The large sized meal has almost 3-4 times the sugar most women and older adults should eat in a day.

The regular meal has about 1 1/2 to 1 2/3 the sugar that active women and most men should eat in a day and the large sized meal has about 2 times the sugar they should eat in a day.

The regular meal is almost all the sugar that active men should eat in a day and the large sized meal is about 1 1/2 times what active men should eat in a day.

Sodium

The regular meal has a little less than 2/3 the daily recommendation for sodium for all categories and the large meal has a little more than 2/3 the amount of sodium you should eat in a day.

- Ask participants' what they thought of the amount of Calories, fat, sugar and salt in the large sized meal.

Answers will vary. Be sure that participants notice that the amounts of Calories, fat, sugar and salt is higher in the large sized meal than the regular.

40. Begin a discussion on Calories, fat, sugar and salt in fast foods.

- Tell the class that foods that are high in fat or high in sugar are also high in Calories. Ask if anyone knows what happens when we eat too many Calories?”

Answers will vary.

- After they answer, tell them that when people eat more Calories in a day than they use in their daily activities, they gain weight. For example, if you eat 2500 Calories in 1 day but only use 2000 Calories, that’s an extra 500 Calories that will be stored as fat. About 3500 Calories equal 1 pound, so if you eat 500 extra calories a day for 7 days, you may gain 1 pound a week. If you did this every week for a year, that would mean you could gain 52 extra pounds a year!
- Ask the class if they know of any reasons why they should eat less fat.

Answers will vary. Make sure that the following are mentioned:

- *Fat has been linked to obesity, heart disease and certain cancers.*
- *Fat affects blood cholesterol levels. When they go up, so does the risk for high blood pressure and heart disease.*
- Ask, “What bad things does sugar do to people?”

Participants will likely say that too much sugar can cause tooth decay, hyperactivity, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), diabetes and/or make you fat. If they do not bring up these problems, be sure to raise them and say that eating too much sugar does not cause hyperactivity, ADHD or diabetes. Sugars do play a role in tooth decay. And eating too many Calories can make people gain weight, which can lead to obesity. Obesity can cause diabetes. Most importantly, high sugar foods and drinks keep people from eating more healthy foods! For example, share that many children now drink high-sugar soft drinks rather than milk. So, they get lots of sugar and miss the calcium and other nutrients they need to help them grow.

Do not attempt to discuss diabetes, but have the phone number of the local diabetes association handy to be able to refer people to it if necessary.

- Ask, “Why is too much salt bad for you?”

If you take in more than the recommended daily amount of salt over a long period of time, you may increase your risk for a disease known as high blood pressure. High blood pressure is another name for hypertension. Arteries

carry blood from your heart to the rest of your body. When the pressure of the blood flowing inside your arteries is too high, you have high blood pressure. High blood pressure can also lead to other health problems such as strokes, heart attacks, heart failure and kidney failure.

41. Have the group discuss, when eating fast foods, what changes they would be willing to make to eat less Calories, fat, sugar and salt.

Answers will vary. Make sure most of the points below are brought up:

- *Use nutrition facts guides to help make your menu choices.*
- *Say NO to larger sized meals!*
- *Limit high-fat toppings, like cheese, sour cream, butter, mayonnaise, gravy and salad dressings. Dressings and toppings are a major reason that food items like salads and chicken sandwiches turn into high-fat choices.*
- *Try eating foods plain, like a plain hamburger without cheese, or get the toppings on the side and decide how much you want to add.*
- *Replace high-fat foods like doughnuts and deep-fried fat foods with low-fat foods like whole grains, fruits and vegetables.*
- *Look for broiled or baked items instead of fried items.*
- *Remove visible fat and skin from meat and poultry.*
- *Order more vegetables on pizza instead of sausage, pepperoni or extra cheese.*
- *Limit the amount of French fries and fruit pies you eat. These items are found at the top of the fruit and the veggie MyPyramid Food group and they have extra fat, sugar and are higher in Calories.*
- *Order orange juice, milk, or water in place of soft drinks and juices that are high in sugar.*
- *Limit the amount of soft drinks and fruit-flavored drinks you order. They are made mostly of sugar, not fruit juice. If drinks have the word “drink,” “punch” or “soda” in the title, they may not be 100% fruit juice and may not count as a fruit serving.*
- *Order diet soft drinks and flavor coffees and teas with sugar substitutes like saccharin, aspartame, acesulfame-K and sucralose (Splenda). These substitutes provide a sweet taste with zero to a few Calories. They are good alternatives to table sugar if you want the sweet taste without the Calories.*
- *Taste foods before salting them.*
- *Eat at fast food places less often.*

42. Ask participants if they have questions or concerns about making fast food choices.

Activity 3: Spreading Out The Fast Food? (30 minutes)

1. Tell the class that in this last activity, you want them to keep in mind what they learned in the last 2 activities. Let them know that in this activity, they will be

repeating the first activity but trying to make healthier fast food choices for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The goal is to pick foods that participants would be willing to eat from all groups of MyPyramid.

2. Pointing to the 2nd MyPyramid poster, ask the class if anyone has an idea for a fast food breakfast that has more foods from the fruits, vegetables, and grains groups of MyPyramid, and that he or she would be willing to eat.
3. Have the volunteer tell you a food from that breakfast. You will be going through the breakfast food by food. Using the thick markers, you should record the food or ingredient on a separate index card. Remember each ingredient should be written on separate cards, except lettuce, tomato, pickle and onion from 1 sandwich should be on 1 card.
4. After the first food is read, place a piece of reusable adhesive on the back of the index card. Stick the index card on the right group either on the bottom, middle or top, depending on how much added fat and sugar the food has on the new MyPyramid poster.
5. Have the same volunteer tell you a 2nd breakfast food. Again place a piece of reusable adhesive on the back of it and stick the card for this food on the in the right place in the correct group on the MyPyramid poster. Unlike Activity 1, you will stick cards on the MyPyramid right after they are written. Do not wait for all of the index cards for the meal to be filled out. Repeat this process for all of his or her breakfast foods.
6. Have a 2nd volunteer describe a lunch that has more foods from the fruit, vegetable, and grain groups of MyPyramid, and that he or she would be willing to eat. Follow the same steps for writing down the food and putting them on the MyPyramid poster as you used for breakfast.
7. Have a 3rd volunteer describe a dinner that has foods from the fruits, vegetables, and grain groups of MyPyramid, and that he or she would be willing to eat. Follow the same steps for writing down the food and putting them on the MyPyramid poster you used for breakfast and lunch.
8. Once all of the foods are placed on the poster, ask the class for reactions. Make sure that participants mention the differences they can see between the MyPyramid poster from Activity 1 and this pyramid. Hopefully, by this point in the lesson, participants will choose more fast foods from the bottom of the MyPyramid groups and less foods from the top of each group.
9. Remind the class to keep MyPyramid in mind when making fast food choices. Choosing more foods from the bottom of each group of MyPyramid and fewer foods from the top of the food groups of MyPyramid will help them eat meals that have less Calories, fat, sugar and salt.

10. Ask participants to raise their hands if they are interested in having a handout to take home about eating less salt and eating less sugar when eating fast food. Pass out the **Cutting The Salt When Eating Fast Food/Cutting The Sugar When Eating Fast Food** handout to each participant whose hand is raised. Repeat this process for the **Cutting The Fat When Eating Fast Food** handout.

Next Week's Goals: (5 minutes)

1. Ask the participants to name 1 thing that they learned in today's class. Make sure that each learning objective is mentioned, and if not, be sure to re-state that objective. Remind them to work on meeting their new goals they set today before the next class. Let them know that they will be asked what changes they made at the next class.
2. Invite comments, suggestions or questions.
3. Thank the participants for coming, and tell them what the next class lesson will be about.

For The Teacher: "What Makes This Lesson Behaviorally Focused?"

- Activity 1 has the participants think about their reasons for eating out at fast food restaurants, the fast food items that they choose when eating out and how their choices measure up on MyPyramid.
- Activity 2 is behaviorally focused because the participants see how their regular fast food choices compare to larger sized choices, in terms of fat, sugar, salt and Calories. Also participants are asked what changes they would be willing to make in their fast food choices in order to avoid eating more Calories, fat, sugar and salt than they need.
- Activity 3 is behaviorally focused because participants practice picking healthier meals that they would be willing to try.



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Reduce The Salt When Eating Fast Food

Use your “salt-smarts” when eating out at fast food places.

- Say NO to larger sized meals!
- Taste foods before adding salt.
- Ask for nutrition information to find menu items that are lower in salt.
- Be clear about how you want your food prepared. Ask for your food to be made without salt or with less salt. For example, ask the server to give you fries from a new batch before they add the salt.
- Choose vegetables and salads. French fries do not count as a vegetable.

Reduce The Sugar When Eating Fast Food

Here are some tips on how to get less sugar at fast food places:

- Look out for high-sugar foods and drinks that have few other nutrients.
- Say NO to larger sized meals! A large soft drink has about 1 ½ times as much sugar as a medium drink!
- Limit the amount of regular soft drinks and fruit-flavored drinks you order. They are made mostly of sugar and water, not fruit juice. If it has the words “drink,” “punch” or “soda” in the title, it is not 100% fruit juice and does not count as a serving of fruit.
- Order orange juice, low-fat milk or water in place of soft drinks, bottled teas and fruit-flavored drinks that are high in sugar.
- Order diet soft drinks and coffees and teas with sugar substitutes like saccharin, aspartame, acesulfame-K and sucralose, which is often, called Splenda. These substitutes provide a sweet taste with few or no Calories. They are good to use in place of table sugar if you want this sweet taste without the Calories.

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Reduce The Fat When Eating Fast Food

Reduce the fat and Calories from your meals by following these tips:

- Order smaller portions.
- Ask the people who work at the restaurant where to find nutrition information for their menu items and look for menu items that are lower in Calories. Ask about low-fat and low-Calorie menu items.
- Watch your portion sizes. Share large portions with someone. Or before you begin your meal, divide the meal in half and take part of it to go in a bag or box to eat later.
- Limit the amount of French fries, onion rings, hash browns and fruit pies you eat. These items ARE NOT counted as vegetables and fruits . These are foods that are found at the top of the vegetable and fruit food groups (vegetables and fruits) and they are packed with Calories.
- If ordering French fries, ask if you can get them without salt.
- Limit high-fat toppings, like cheese, sour cream, butter, mayonnaise, gravy and salad dressings. Toppings are a major reason that food items like salads and chicken sandwiches turn into high-fat choices. Try using small amounts of ketchup and mustard or slices of onion, tomato and lettuce on your sandwiches and ask about low-fat dressings for your salad.
- Eat foods plain, like a plain hamburger without cheese and toppings, or get the toppings on the side and only put on a small amount.
- Look for broiled or baked items instead of fried items.
- Remove visible fat and skin from meat and poultry.
- Order more vegetables on your pizza instead of sausage, pepperoni or extra cheese.
- Try low-fat or fat-free milk, cheese, ice cream and yogurt.
- Ask the restaurant if they prepare any dishes using egg whites instead of whole eggs. For example, you can ask if they make a breakfast sandwich with egg whites.
- Order low-fat breakfast foods. Have hot and cold cereals, yogurt and fruits. Cut back on high-fat foods like sausage, bacon and hash browns.
- Replace high-fat foods like doughnuts and deep-fried fat foods with low-fat foods.

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