

Nutrition Notes from the Neuromuscular Center



Most people today have more to do than there is time in the day. Many will turn to fast food for meals to save them time. While this is convenient, it is not always healthy. There are new trends at fast food restaurants to offer healthier options with meals. While this is a step in the right direction, one must still watch what they order.

Fast Food

Restaurants spend a lot of time and money trying to figure out what consumers want and how to persuade these consumers to choose them. Make sure you are doing your research as well. Look for their nutritional information on their websites and for displays inside the restaurant. Knowing what you are eating will help you make better choices.

Beverages

Water is really the best option when choosing a beverage. Drinking 2-3 glasses of low fat milk a day is also a good choice. Most people do not realize how many calories they drink in most beverages. The average size of sodas and coffee drinks have gone up dramatically since they were first introduced. Just as it is important to know how many calories are in the food you eat, you need to make sure you know the amount of calories you are drinking as well.

Fast Foods

There are better fast food choices today - fresh salads, apple slices and milk, just to name a few. If you are a frequent visitor to fast food restaurants, here are some tips to help you make better choices.

Portion Sizes

Everyone likes french fries, onion rings or other favorite sides with their fast food. Be sure if you make the decision to eat side items, that you choose wisely. Ordering smaller sizes will save tons of calories and salt. Large orders of french fries can be in upwards of 500 calories and 350 mg of sodium.

Ordering Know How

Many fast food restaurants will ask if you want a special they are running before you even order. Do not let this change your mind when you order. Try to look at the menus of your favorite restaurants in advance and know the healthier items. Most restaurants have their nutritional information online and in the store.

Snacking on Fast Food

Do not use fast food to help with a snack attack. You will end up with more calories and salt than you need. Try to keep some portable snacks with you. Granola bars, whole fruit, or nuts can make great low calorie snacks.

Share and Share Alike

Most fast food restaurants have larger portions than you should have at a meal. When you get your meal take half and save it for lunch the next day. You can also share with a friend. This will save you a lot of calories and leave you with room to add fruit or vegetables to your meal.

Better Choices

Most fast food restaurants have healthier side choices now. You are able to get apple slices, carrots, low fat milk and oatmeal with fruit. Swapping out one of their healthier choices will save you on calorie and salt and help you get much needed vitamins and minerals.



“Undress” Your Food

Order your food without sauces. You can save a lot of calories by asking for your food without mayonnaise, sour cream, dressings or spreads. You can ask for packets of sauces and add them sparingly yourself.

Special Orders

Most fast food restaurants will accommodate special orders. You can ask for no salt on your fries and no sauces on your sandwiches, while adding extra lettuce, tomato, and onion. Also carrying a shaker of salt substitute for your fries will help to cut back your sodium intake.

Enjoy Your Food

Take time to enjoy what you are eating. Most people eat what is in front of them without thinking about it. If you take the time to enjoy your food and give your body time to process what you are eating, you might find that you eat less.

Beverages

Many people today do not realize how many calories they drink. Adding more water to your diet and cutting the amount of sugary beverages is a good start to cutting these calories.

Coffee

With a coffee shop on almost every corner, more teens are drinking coffee beverages. Most of these drinks come in grande sizes and are loaded with calories. While there are no recommendations on the amount of caffeine a teen can safely consume, the American Dietetic Association recommends no more than 200 mg or a medium cup of gourmet coffee.

Soda

Most people drink soda everyday, and are not aware that it is full of empty calories. It offers no nutrition, and can actually rob your bones of calcium. Try making soda a treat instead of an everyday drink.

Milk

Milk is full of vitamins, minerals, and protein. Most people need 2-3 glasses a day to help build strong muscles and bones. Try drinking low fat or fat free milk. Chocolate milk does count. While it does contain more calories, it has the same nutrients.

Tea

Tea can be a great drink hot or cold. There are many flavored, uncaffeinated choices out there. Watch out for the pre-sweetened teas, as they can pack the calories on quick. Instead try sweetening them yourself with a sugar substitute or use a flavored hot tea bag and ice it down.

Sports Drinks

Many people drink sports drinks during exercise, or when they are ill. Sports drinks normally have less calories than soda and juices, but should still be had in moderation due to the higher sugar and salt content.



Juice

Juice can be good for you, if you have one serving (4 oz). If you are going to drink juice make sure it is 100% juice and does not have added sugar in it. If you like the flavor of juice, but not the calories, try sugar free drink mixes.

Water

Water should make up the majority of what you drink in a day and unfortunately, most people do not get enough water. Easy ways to get it in include carrying a water bottle with you and drinking it with meals and snacks. Try adding sugar free flavor packs, to add variety.

WATER BOTTLES

Keep bottles around the house so they can be filled with water quickly. You can take them with you whenever you leave the house.

KEEP IT COLD

Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator. If it is cold and ready at your fingertips, you will probably be more likely to drink more of it, more often.

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Watch what you drink.



When the first Coca-Cola was introduced in 1915 it came in a 6-ounce bottle. Today, you'd be hard-pressed to find one that small; instead you get 20-, 32-, even 64-ounce sodas loaded with calories. You may also drink sweetened teas, calorie-laden coffee drinks, and juices that contain very little real juice but a lot of sugar. Sugared drinks don't provide vitamins, minerals, or fiber.

Water: You Are What You Drink

Over half of the human body contains water. It is important for you to drink plenty of water daily. Water helps your body flush waste, regulate temperature, prevent kidney stones and constipation.

