

Eat Right on the Run

Eating right is easy to do... when you have all the time, budget, and creativity it takes to make delicious, healthy meals. What about when you don't? Eating well when time isn't on your side is still possible—it just takes a little ingenuity, commitment, and some eye-opening facts.

Some Fast Food Facts

Fast food is just that – FAST!

If you are like many Americans you eat on the go, and you do it often. With over 200,000 fast food restaurant options all over the country, over 50 million people eat quick meals every day (franchisehelp.com). When polled, the most common reason people give for eating fast food is the need to get a meal quickly. Over 20 percent of Americans eat meals in their car every week. Whether squeezing it in between shifts, balancing a meal while working through lunch, or grabbing something on the road between school and practice, many of us play the Mealtime Mambo – making food fit into our schedules instead of making our schedules fit our need for nourishment.

Fast Does Not Mean Frugal

A common misconception about fast food is that it is cheaper than making your own meal and taking it along with you. On the contrary, the average fast food lunch costs at least \$5–\$7 per meal. Americans spend an estimated \$1200 per year on these speedy meals. Compare that to a lunch made at home which costs an average of \$1.50 - \$3.00



per meal. The cost savings over a year can really add up!

Sometimes the Healthy Option Isn't Healthier

Common sense would say that a salad is a better option when it comes to nutrients and calories versus a cheeseburger, right? Well, maybe not. A fast food quarter-pound cheeseburger has 244 calories, 11.6 grams of fat, and 427 mg of sodium. On the other hand, a premium southwest chicken salad with grilled chicken has 350 calories, 11 grams of fat, and 1070 mg of sodium, and that is WITHOUT any dressing.

HELP for Making Fast Meal Choices

So what can be done to help kick the fast-food craving to the curb? Here are a few ideas:

H = Home Options

Keep your finances and fat grams in check by bucking the fast food trend and have some “staycations” for your meals. Stock the kitchen with easy, go-to items for different meals throughout the day. Buy quality items that you enjoy. A little more money spent at the grocery store is still a lot less spent in the drive thru. Need ideas? Check out eatingwell.com and allrecipes.com for easy tips on how to stock your at-home pantry with foods that will help make cooking faster and easier.

E = Evaluate Needs

Is eating out frequently caused by schedule needs? By location restrictions? By procrastination? Take an



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“So when it comes to eating healthy, it’s just doing the right thing. And it’s not something you have to do 365 days a year, but I think it’s something you have to do 25 days a month. Let’s put it that way.” – Mike Ditka



honest look at why fast food has become a go-to for your lifestyle. Sometimes a quick meal is the only/best option available, and that's OK, as long as it isn't every day! In those situations, evaluate the options and pick the best solution. For example, do you have opportunities later in the day for healthier options? Then choose a smaller fast food item to just bridge the hunger gap until that time.

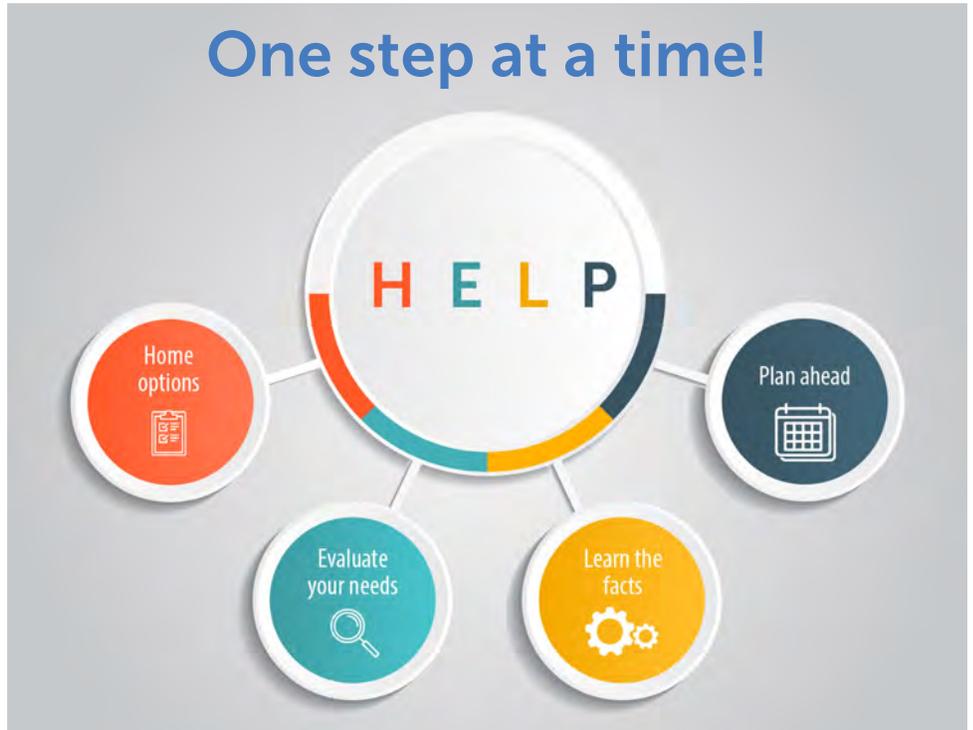
L = Learn Facts

Use easy online searches and menus to get familiar with the nutrition facts of your favorite restaurants. Almost every fast food restaurant has an online nutrition calculator. Knowledge is a powerful tool when it comes to choosing what to put in our bodies. Do I REALLY want the small vanilla shake with 490 calories and 14 grams of fat? Or would I be just as satisfied with a vanilla ice cream cone for 200 calories and 5 grams of fat? Know before you go!

P = Plan Ahead

Breakfast items like eggs can be cooked in only two or three minutes on the stove. Better yet, take 17 minutes on the weekend and boil a dozen eggs -voila! A hard-boiled egg for each day of the week! Great as a meal or a snack. Think of all the time saved from not being in the drive thru lane! No place to keep a refrigerated lunch? Consider investing in a quality cooler – you are worth it! Making your

One step at a time!



health and wellness a priority enables you do all that you have to do. Don't have time to plan it yourself? Consider asking a nutritional consultant for advice. PAS has experts who can help you make a plan that works for your lifestyle.

Fast food is not going away. And let's face it, sometimes it really is the fastest option. Balance is the key. Knowledge is power, especially when it comes to eating fast on the run. Make informed decisions. Choose what is right for your body and your nutritional needs.

Weight and Nutrition Coaching

Finding a healthy balance when it comes to eating and exercise can be big challenge. Let PAS' team of expert dieticians help you find what works for you! Each individual has unique challenges when it comes to making lifestyle changes to improve overall nutrition. The dieticians at PAS can help you:

- manage weight
- customize a healthy meal plan for you and your family
- develop nutritional strategies to prevent or manage health conditions such as diabetes, osteoporosis, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and food intolerances
- set goals for increasing activity
- achieve health lifestyle changes

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