

# Healthy takeaway food does exist: Here's your cheatsheet

## The best choices

Nothing really compares to a nutritionally balanced, home cooked meal, which in many cases is healthier but there are times when you need a convenient or fun alternative and want to grab a takeaway. You don't have to give it up to lose weight, eat healthy or if you are following a diabetic or cholesterol lowering diet. 'Fast' foods are rapidly becoming a major part of our lifestyles as the pace of life gets faster. We are also demanding a more casual lifestyle and 'convenience' which lead us to this trend towards resorting to fast food.

Fast food is very often though, too high in fat, salt, sugar and/ or kilojoules and too low in dietary fibre with little in the way of whole meal or grain bread, vegetables, salads, fruit, lentils or dried beans. These foods contribute all important fibre and also help us not to overeat. A typical meal at a takeaway can supply over half the daily kilojoules for the average woman!

Fast food rarely comes in small portions. Everything is sized 'super' or 'jumbo' with aim of giving customers value for money. Coupled to speedy service and quick sittings, it is easy to see why fast food promotes over consumption and under nutrition.

Some fast food also carries no labeling. Processed foods sold through supermarkets are required by law to provide a full list of ingredients, yet fast food may give customers virtually no information about its ingredients or nutritional value, although this is improving.

## General guidelines

Aim to apply the general principles of healthy eating i.e. aim to eat low fat, especially saturated fat, low kilojoule, high fibre, low sugar, lower salt foods where possible. The following tips will assist you with selecting the best choice/s.

- Avoid, if possible, fried and fatty foods and dishes with 'heavy' sauces especially butter, cream or cheese sauces.

- Choose protein foods that have a lower fat content e.g. fish, chicken, veal and lean meat and trim any skin off the chicken and fat from meat. Limit fatty meats like salami and sausage.
- Ask for salads with dressing served separately. If this is not possible, then choose those salads with less dressings (especially restrict thick mayonnaise dressings). Ask for extra salad where possible on sandwiches/burgers.
- Preferably choose fruit for dessert most of the time, if available.
- Take care with alcohol and choose low kilojoule (low-calorie or diet) drinks or water, in preference to fruit juice.

The lists following give you some of the 'best choices' available and the choices to restrict. Choices from the 'best choices' menu options are generally lower in kilojoules, sugar and fat than the choices from the 'best avoided' menu options. Many takeaways however, are also quite high in salt. Choose your meal from the 'best' choices' listed, particularly if you get takeaways often.

## Best Choices:

### General Guidelines...

- Plain Hamburgers, grilled chicken burgers or Steak Sandwiches/ Rolls (grilled) with extra salad (not with 'the lot' or 'extras' including bacon, fried egg, cheese or double meat additions).
- Barbecued Chicken (skin removed)
- Some Chinese Takeaways including lots of vegetables and that are low in fat like chop suey, chow mien, beef or chicken in black bean sauce with vegetables or chicken and cashew nuts. Have steamed rather than special fried rice to accompany your meal.
- Mexican Tacos, tostadas, burritos and Yiros.
- Lebanese doner kebabs.
- Japanese food (not tempura) e.g. Californian Rolls, Sushi lunch box (assorted)
- Pizza (limit to 2 -3 slices) ( Limit extra meat additions, salami and thick crusts)

- Satays.
- Hot baked potatoes with cheese, cottage cheese and salad, without butter and sour cream.
- Plain Hot Dog (add sauce or mustard if desired) (salad optional)
- Sandwiches, Wraps and Rolls – using whole meal/grain bread either fresh / toasted. Use margarine and mayonnaise sparingly. Add plenty of salads. (Limit vegetables marinated in oil like tomatoes). Include lean protein food like chicken, tuna, roast beef or egg in your filling.
- Chicken Roll

## Some Specific Options:

### *Subway®*

- 6 inch Subway®, or wrap, and choose the 'Light' or 'less than 6 grams of fat' menu options. These include: chicken strips, chicken teriyaki, roast chicken, roast beef, ham, and turkey. Ask for many salads. Choose a small serve of dressing or select honey mustard or sweet onion which have the lowest kilojoules.

### *Wok in a Box®*

- Skinny noodle varieties (small size)
- Seafood noodles
- Vegetarian noodles
- Tom Yum soup

### *Noodle Box®*

- Salad Box varieties
- Satay Chicken
- Honey Soy and Ginger Tofu
- Teriyaki Beef with Lime

### *Fasta Pasta®*

- Entrée sized pasta dish with red (tomato based) sauce (e.g. Bolognese /Napolitano /Marinara /Puttanesca) not a creamy sauce, and salad. Ask for no fat, margarine or oil to be added to the pan when sauce is reheated.

### *Red Rooster®*

- Skin-free Grilled Chicken range including burger, wrap, baguette and salad
- Baguette D'Lite
- Roast Chicken and Garden salads

### Red Rock Noodle Bar®

- Slim Chicken Noodle
- Slim Seafood Noodle

*\*\*Note: This list is not exhaustive so if your takeaway isn't listed here please follow the guidelines in this information sheet to assist you with making the best choice, and if you are not sure how a food is prepared, just ask them. And remember, you can often ask to grill rather than fry or to add more of something, e.g. Salad/ vegetables and avoid other additions, e.g. Fried onions or mayo.*

## Best Avoided (or restricted):

- Soft drinks, milkshakes, thick shakes, flavored milk.
- French fries, hot chips, potato scallops, fried spring rolls, fried seafood, schnitzel rolls, crumbed seafood.
- Battered sausages, chiko rolls.
- Pies, pasties, sausage rolls.
- Fried Chicken.
- Large Hamburgers with double meat and cheese additions with little salad.



For more tips visit my Facebook page 'Caron Milham Dietitians and Nutritionists'

[www.healthy-guide.com](http://www.healthy-guide.com)

