

Audio Transcript for Eating Out the Healthy Way for Preschool Children

Welcome to Eating Out the Healthy Way for Preschool Children.

About This Course

Busy families trying to balance work, school, and outside activities often find themselves frequently eating meals out. This course provides you with information to make the healthiest possible choices when dining out. You will learn...

Key factors to consider when selecting items to eat and drink when dining out.

The most nutritious choices to select for your child and for yourself when dining at a variety of styles of restaurants

How to get additional nutrition information on the menu items served at restaurants and fast food locations.

The Flores Family

Meet Maya and her son José. Maya's family has been eating out a lot recently due to her busy schedule. Maya finds it challenging to choose healthy meals from the menu for José. She is concerned that José may not be getting the nutrients he needs to grow.

The Problem with Eating Out

When the family eats out, Maya notices that José drinks less milk and eats fewer fruits and vegetables. She also notices that José tends to consume more sugar-sweetened beverages, total calories, added sugar, and fat when eating fast food.

Calories and Fats

Maya notices that some restaurants show the nutrition information under the menu items. Other restaurants post their information online. Maya wants José to eat healthy, so she is paying close attention to the calories and fat contained in the foods he consumes. Read what Maya found out below.

What are calories? A calorie is a way to measure the amount of energy in food. Calories contained in foods and beverages provide energy for the body to function—energy to make your heart beat, to breathe, and for your brain to think. Calories also provide the body with energy for movement and physical activity, such as clapping your hands, walking the dog, and riding your bike.

Preschool children generally need between 1200-1600 calories daily depending on their age, gender, and activity level. For specific information on the amount of calories your child should consume daily, consider discussing this with a registered dietician. Read more at ChooseMyPlate.gov

Read what Maya found out about fat. Fat is an essential nutrient, necessary for the body to function. It is important to understand that there are several different types of fats in the foods we eat. The fats differ in how they are structured and based on their structure have different effects on our body's cholesterol levels. Drag slider to the right or left to read more.

Saturated fats are generally solid or hard at room temperature, such as butter and lard. Saturated fats can raise LDL cholesterol levels (the bad type of cholesterol), thus we want to limit our intake of saturated fat in the diet. Unsaturated fats are generally liquid or soft at room temperature, such as olive or vegetable oils. The fat you get from nuts, avocados, and fatty fish are also unsaturated fats. Unsaturated fats can decrease LDL cholesterol levels in the body and are healthy to consume as part of a balanced diet.

Watch those portion sizes!

Maya orders José's meal from the Kid's Menu to ensure he is getting the right size portion. This also saves her money! Children have smaller stomachs than adults and cannot eat as much in one sitting as adults can. Children do not need adult-sized portions or super-sized meals. Select meals to read more!

Regarding super-sized meals: If the restaurant does not have a child's menu, consider ordering one healthy entrée to share with your child. As a parent, be a role model and avoid the temptation to super-size your meals. Although the increase in cost to supersize your meal is small, only \$0.29 - \$0.49, this can add over 400 calories to your meal. This is not type of nutrition you want to be filling your body with!

Regarding kid's meals: Some fast food restaurants have "Big Kid" meals that include double meat burgers. Preschool aged children do not need double meat burgers. If your child is still hungry after completing his/her meal, you can provide a nutritious snack when you get home. For ideas on healthy snacks, view the Head Start online course "Healthy Snacks for Preschool Children"

To Super-size, or Not?

To see the increases in calories and fat, Maya compared the nutrition information for a super-sized fast food meal to a standard-sized meal. Click on the food items to reveal what Maya found.

A supersized meal includes a hamburger, large fries and a large soda. It contains 1230 calories and 44 grams of fat. A standard meal includes a hamburger, small fries and a small soda. It contains 810 calories and 31 grams of fat. The supersized meal contains an additional 420 calories and 13 grams of fat than the standard meal.

Watch out for fried foods!

Maya limits José from consuming too much fried foods, since they are higher in saturated fat and calories than grilled, baked, roasted, or broiled foods. Compare the calories and saturated fat contained in fried versus grilled foods below.

A fried chicken sandwich contains 370 calories and 17 grams of fat.

A fried fish sandwich contains 390 calories and 19 grams of fat.

Six fried chicken nuggets contain 200 calories and 10 grams of fat.

A grilled chicken sandwich contains 360 calories and 6 grams of fat.

A hamburger contains 250 calories and 8 grams of fat.

Six chicken nuggets contain 100 calories and 2.5 grams of fat.

Healthy Tips: Try to limit foods that are fried, including French fries, onion rings, chicken strips, chicken nuggets, fried fish, and fried meat (i.e. chicken fried steak).

Tip: If you desire fries, order a small serving and share them amongst your family.

Just a few fries might help meet your craving without undoing your intent to have an overall healthy meal.

Hidden Calories?

Some foods and drinks regarded as healthy can be high in calories. When Maya orders a salad, she expects it to be low in calories. This is not necessarily the case. Maya has discovered that her salad contains “hidden calories.” Build a salad to find out what she means!

Start with a 45-calorie, 0% fat green salad. Add some toppings and watch those “hidden calories” increase! 1.9 b

Healthy Tips: Watch out for salad dressings and sauces that are high in calories and fat. Toppings high in calories and fat include mayonnaise, tartar sauce, salad dressings, sour cream, butter, and cheese based sauces. Instead of these, choose catsup, mustard, light salad dressings, and salsa, which are all lower in calories and fat. Tip: Ask for dressings and sauces to be served on the side, this way you can determine how much to put on your salad or sandwich.

Eating Out for Breakfast

Maya keeps these healthy tips in mind when the family eats breakfast out. Select the food items to read some of Maya's suggestions. If your child likes breakfast tacos, select potato and egg on a corn or whole wheat tortilla – add salsa, pico de gallo, or tomatoes for added flavor. Order whole grains when possible— oatmeal, whole wheat toast, English Muffins, and corn or whole wheat tortillas are great choices! English Muffins and toast contain less calories and saturated fat than biscuits or croissants and are a more nutritious choice for your child. Including eggs in your child's breakfast is a great way to increase the nutrient content of the meal. In addition to providing protein, eggs contain iron, Vitamin A, Vitamin D, Vitamin B12, and Riboflavin all of which are important for your child's health. Enjoy eggs as part of an overall balanced diet. What a great way to start the day! Select lean meat options such as ham or turkey sausage with your child's breakfast, which is lower in saturated fat than bacon or regular sausage. Limit sugary pastries and donuts, which tend to be high in added sugar and lower in the nutrients your child needs to grow. When ordering pancakes or French toast, request the butter and syrup be served on the side so you can control the amount that is added to your child's meal. Choose fresh fruit or a yogurt parfait as a healthy breakfast side. These can be a great option as an afternoon snack, or as a dessert with a meal as well. Select water, low-fat milk, or 100% fruit juice instead of soda, lemonade, or other sugar-sweetened beverages.

Assess your knowledge!

Guess which item on the kid's meal has the least amount of calories. Select food items to find out!

A grilled cheese sandwich contains 430 calories.

A serving of macaroni and cheese contains 440 calories.

A 6 inch pepperoni pizza contains 670 calories.

Grilled chicken bits contains 340 calories.

Fast Food Top Choice for Kids

This kids menu includes top choices, as well as some not good choices, for your child. Consider these top choices for your child when ordering beverages: water, 100% fruit juice, Fat-free or 2% milk. Some beverages not to buy your child are soda, lemonade and other sugar-sweetened beverages. When ordering burgers, consider hamburgers with a singly patty on whole wheat bread with extra vegetables. Another good choice are grilled chicken nuggets. Try staying away from fried chicken nuggets. Your child may want to try a deli sandwich or wrap. Some good choices would be grilled chicken, turkey, ham, roast beef, on whole wheat bread with a variety of vegetable toppings. Healthy sides that you often find on kids menus include: apple slices, oranges, fruit cups, side salad, baked chips, pretzels, raisins, fruit and yogurt parfait. Try not to have your child consume French fries. If your child wants to eat French fries, consider ordering a small size and sharing with the family.

Healthy Tips: Choose whole grains when possible. Request burgers and sandwiches be served on a whole wheat bun or whole wheat bread. Many fast food restaurants now have whole wheat buns available upon request. Order dressings on the side so you can control the amount added to the burger or sandwich. Mustard or ketchup are lower fat choices than mayonnaise or salad dressing (i.e. Ranch).

Empty calories: Soda contains empty calories from sugar and many sodas also contain caffeine, which children do not need. Empty calories provide little to no nutritional value, and they do not provide vitamins and minerals needed for your child's growth, development, and overall health. In a preschool child's diet, concern is raised when foods or beverages with empty calories take the place of other more nutritious foods/beverages in the diet. When children drink soda in place of milk, they are missing out on the calcium and vitamin D that milk provides. As the image notes, sweet tea contains 6 teaspoons of sugar per cup serving and lemonade and cola drinks contain around 7 teaspoons of sugar approximately per cup of serving. Note: For additional information, see Head Start's online nutrition module Sugar-Sweetened Beverages.

What about appetizers?

Many appetizers are high in calories and saturated fat, which is especially a problem when your child fills up on appetizers before the meal. Consider ordering a soup or salad ahead of the meal instead of an appetizer. Try to limit these high calorie appetizers prior to the meal: chips and queso, fried mushrooms, fried onions, fried mozzarella cheese sticks, chicken wings, loaded potato skins. Some healthy

alternatives include soup and salad. Good choices include broth or vegetable-based soups, such as minestrone, chicken noodle, chicken caldo,

Avoid cheese- or cream-based soups (higher in calories/fat), such as broccoli cheese and cream chowders.

Healthy Mexican Food Tips

When eating at a Mexican food restaurant, Maya tries to make healthy choices for her family. Select the food items to read some healthy tips. Fajitas are a great choice since the meat is grilled and you can select the toppings that are added on. The best choice is chicken fajitas (made with white/breast meat) on corn or wheat tortillas.

Top fajitas with salsa, pico de gallo, corn salsa, and avocado. Limit sour cream and queso, which are higher in saturated fat. Request corn or wheat tortillas when possible instead of flour. Limit entrees that have heavy sauces, are fried, or that are filled with cheese, such as beef or cheese enchiladas, chile rellenos, or taquitos. Instead, try chicken enchiladas with a light tomatillo sauce. For side items, opt for whole beans, Spanish rice, and side salads. Refried beans are typically made using lard, bacon fat, oil, or butter, which adds calories and fat to the dish. Healthier options include charro, borracho, and black beans, which are prepared in a broth with added onion, garlic, and other seasonings. Limit the number of chips and queso dip your child eats before the meal arrives. Chips can fill your child up without providing the appropriate nutrition your child needs. A serving of tortilla chips is approximately 7–12 chips (depending on the size of the chip). Try to ensure your child eats no more than this prior to the meal.

Assess your knowledge!

Assess your knowledge. Guess which item on the kid's meal has the least amount of fat? Select food items to find out!

A kid's cheese enchilada contains 29 grams of fat.

A bean and cheese taco contains 14 grams of fat.

A soft chicken taco contains 7 grams of fat.

A crispy beef taco contains 12 grams of fat.

Healthy Italian Food Tips

When the Flores family eats Italian food, Maya tries to get the healthiest choices for José. Select the food items and read Maya's healthy tips when eating at the local trattoria.

Pizza can be turned into a healthy choice for your child – the key is topping the pizza with lean protein, such as chicken, Canadian bacon, or ham, and then loading it up with vegetables. For a fun twist, consider adding pineapple as a pizza topping – children love the sweet taste! Order steamed vegetables or a side salad for your child to eat with the pizza.

Select dishes with tomato sauce instead of Alfredo or cheese sauce. Tomato sauce provides the body with vitamin C and other antioxidants, such as lycopene, beneficial for health.

Alfredo and cheese sauces tend to be higher in calories and saturated fat.

Fresh bread and bread sticks are commonly served with the meal at Italian restaurants. Try to limit your child to one slice of bread or bread stick. Children often fill up on bread and then do not have room for their entrée.

Request the butter on the side so you can control the amount added.

Select lean sources of protein to be included in your child's pasta, such as chicken or seafood, which are lower in saturated fat than sausage or meat balls.

Request extra vegetables be added to your child's pasta. If your child likes broccoli, carrots, green beans or other vegetables, ask that they be included in the pasta, as this is an easy way to add nutrients to the meal.

Healthy Oriental Food Tips

When the Flores family eats out at an Oriental food restaurant, Maya orders from the kid's menu to ensure José receives child-sized portions. Select the food items to read Maya's healthy tips when eating Oriental food.

If your child likes noodles, select a lo mein entrée made with beef, chicken, or seafood, and a variety of vegetables. Request extra vegetables be added into your child's entrée.

Be specific and add the vegetables your child enjoys and will eat– carrots, broccoli, snap peas, and mushrooms are all great choices.

Stir-fry dishes made with beef, chicken, or seafood, and a variety of vegetables are a healthier choice than fried entrees, such as lemon chicken and sweet and sour pork. Add additional vegetables that your child enjoys to eat!

Limit heavily fried appetizers and sides, such as egg rolls and fried wontons.

Select brown rice with your child's entrée instead of fried rice.

It's about moderation and balance!

When the Flores family has to eat out, Maya tries to balance less healthy choices with healthier items. If Jose orders chicken nuggets for his entree, she balances this out with apple slices or vegetables on the side. If the family eats dinner out, she balances this out by eating healthy meals for breakfast and lunch at home.

Planning ahead, Maya tries to save eating out for special occasions only. She understands that moderation and balance are the keys to eating out healthy! Healthy Tips: When selecting where to eat, Maya chooses restaurants that have healthy options available. A key point to remember when eating out is that your child does not need to clean his/her plate and should not be forced to do so. Your child can always have a healthy snack later on, so get a “To-Go” container and take the leftovers home for later. Children should be encouraged to listen to their internal cues of hunger and fullness and stop eating when they begin to feel full – not stuffed!

Course Completion

Congratulations! You have successfully completed this course. In this course you learned that eating healthy when dining out is possible, the key lies in planning ahead and being aware of what nutritious choices restaurants have to offer. You also learned how to access nutrition information from restaurant menu items so you can make informed choices when dining out. We hope this information is helpful when making healthy selections for your family when dining out. Important notice:

To print your Certificate of Completion, please certify that you have finished the course, then click Submit.