

Idaho Fit Kids = Happy Kids



“Happy Meal,” Healthy Child?



Most children love fast foods. Commercials tell parents that burgers, fries and shakes make children smile. But, if your child eats fast foods more than once a week, think about these facts:

- ☐ Some fast foods are healthier choices than others.
- ☐ Many fast foods are high in sugar, fat and salt. Children naturally prefer these tastes. The more they are exposed to them, the more they want them.
- ☐ Children may not know what foods are good for them. They know what tastes good. They can learn that healthy foods taste good too.

As a parent, you are faced with the challenge of teaching your child to like healthy foods. When you are too busy to cook, here are some helpful tips for making wise fast food choices:

- ☐ Encourage your child to choose from the healthier fast food options that *you* buy.

Instead of this...

large burger
fried chicken
large fries
sausage pizza
soda or shake

try this ...

small burger
grilled chicken
baked potato/small fries
pizza with vegetables
water or low fat milk

and be sure to add some fruits and vegetables.

add extra lettuce and tomato
baked potato with a little butter
fruits and vegetables from the salad bar
broccoli, peppers or other vegetables on pizza
fruit juice

- ☐ If your child insists on something else, say, “These are the choices, which ones do you want?” If your child refuses, wait until the next meal or the next. Sooner or later, children eat what parents serve. Children may have to skip a few meals before they understand that *you* control what foods are offered.
- ☐ Rather than eating at the restaurant, get “take out.” That way, you can make a fast food meal healthier by adding some fruits and vegetables from home. If you are in a hurry, buy items from a salad bar at the restaurant or grocery store.
- ☐ Ask the restaurant for the fat and calorie content of their foods. Choose the ones which have the least. Don’t be fooled. Some foods may look or sound healthy, yet be loaded with fat and calories.
- ☐ TV ads impact your child’s attitude toward food. Limit exposure to food commercials by limiting TV time. TV ads also tell parents to love their children by giving them sweet or salty treats. Love them with good nutrition instead.



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & WELFARE

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