



TRACKS Lesson Plan

Making Healthier Fast Food Choices

Fast Food: Figuring Out the Facts

Grade: 9-12

I. Nutrition Education Objective:

Goal 1: Students will comprehend concepts consistent with USDA guidance related to eating and physical activity for good health.

Objective: As a result of Pennsylvania's SNAP-Ed plan, students will know, understand, analyze, and apply concepts, as developmentally appropriate, that are consistent with USDA guidance about the benefits of:

1. Limiting foods high in fat, sodium and added sugar.
2. Balancing calorie intake with calories expended.

Goal 2: Students will apply skills consistent with USDA guidance related to eating and physical activity for good health.

Objective: As a result of Pennsylvania's SNAP-Ed plan, students will be able to:

1. Assess personal health practices.
2. Plan strategies for performing health-enhancing practices.

II. Pennsylvania Educational Standards:

- A. 2.2 Computation and Estimation
- B. 2.3 Measurement and Estimation
- C. 2.5, Mathematical Problem Solving and Communication
- D. 10.1 Concepts of Health
- E. 10.2 Healthful Living
- F. 10.4 Physical Activity
- G. 11.3 Food Science and Nutrition

III. Outcomes:

- A. Students will identify fast food choices that are more healthful.
- B. Students will define the health benefits of choosing smaller portions of foods high in fat, calories, and sodium.
- C. Students will describe the basics of energy balance and how to maintain a healthy weight.
- D. Students will evaluate their fast food choices and identify ways to improve.

IV. Materials:

- A. Laptop/Projector with PowerPoint presentation
- B. Visuals: Fat Tubes, Fat/Muscle/Artery display, Marked containers with pre-measured fat
- C. Handout: Fast Food Nutrition Guide with "Fast Food Makeover" worksheet
- D. Alternate Activity: "Where's the Fat Guessing Card" with Fast Food Guessing Cards
- E. Optional Handout: "Fast Food: Figuring Out the Facts" fill in the blanks worksheet (1/student)
- F. Supplies: Pencils

- G. Food Tasting
- H. Reinforcement that conveys the appropriate nutrition message.
- I. Hand wipes
- J. Caregiver Newsletter: Fast Food
- K. Extension lessons to be given to the teacher

V. Procedure:

A. Introductory:

1. *Lesson Introduction*
2. *Introduction of educator presenting the lesson*
3. *Brief introduction about the workshop and its importance to high school students*

B. Developmental:

1. **Slide 1: Fast Food: Healthy or Horrible?**
2. **Slide 2: Project Sponsors**
3. **Slide 3: Survey**

Ask the students the following questions. Try to spark discussion and compare the different responses.

- a. How many of you eat fast food?
 - b. How often do you eat fast food?
 - c. What is your favorite fast food choice?
 - d. What do you consider “fast food?” *Remind students that fast food can include not only burger and fried chicken restaurants, but also pizza, take-out, corner and convenience stores, donut/bagel shops, street vendors, etc. Emphasize that the points in the lesson apply to food regardless of whether it is from a fast food restaurant, a more formal restaurant, or cooked at home (i.e., fried chicken cooked at home can have just as much fat and calories as something from a fast food restaurant).*
 - e. Do you think fast food is healthy or unhealthy? Why?
4. **Slide 4: What Are Today’s Topics??**
 - a. Topics for today’s lesson include fast food and making healthier choices, energy balance, and portion size.
 5. **Slide 5: Pop Quiz: Which Meal Has the Least Amount of Fat?**

Take a poll to determine which meal students believe is the lowest in fat. Go through each food choice and discuss why each one has a lot of fat. Also discuss ways to improve each choice or what they could choose in place of these food items.

 - a. Choice #1: The burger packs in a lot of calories and fat, and the large fries are high in fat. A better choice is a small burger and small fries.
 - i. Calories = 1250 for quarter pound burger + large fry
 - ii. Calories = 490 for hamburger + small fry (20g fat instead of 54g)
 - b. Choice #3: Although this is a salad, there are many sources of fat in this meal. The shell is deep fried in oil and contains a lot of fat. Also it contains a lot of ground beef, cheese, and sour cream (Calories = 870). Next time ask for the salad without the shell (500 calories without the shell and only 27 grams of fat).
 - c. Choice #2: This meal is the best choice, at 34g of fat, even though the chicken is fried (Calories = 710; without soda = 500 calories). *Ask the students how they could make the meal better.* An even better choice will be grilled chicken since fried foods are high in fat. Also, be sure to order dressing on the side, and make sure it is low fat dressing. (A grilled chicken salad with low fat balsamic vinaigrette dressing has only 250 calories and 9 grams of fat).

6. Slide 6: Fast Food Facts

- a. Americans spend a lot of money on fast food. Every year we spend more and more on eating out. *Ask students why they believe people eat out so much. Possible responses include: to socialize with friends, too busy to cook, don't know how to cook, etc.*
 - i. On French fries alone Americans spent \$110 billion dollars in 2000. This is more money than Americans spend on college. In 1970 we spent \$6 billion.
- b. Americans also eat out a lot. Average American = 198 times/year
 - i. *Ask the students to figure out how many times a week this is. (Answer: 52 weeks in a year, so $198/52 = 3.8$ times a week.). Have students consider whether they eat out more or less often than average.*

7. Slide 7: Too Much Fast Food?

- a. Think about your health when choosing foods and beverages. Fast food and other restaurant meals are usually high in fat, calories and sodium. Cooking at home gives us more control over the amount of fat, calories, and sodium in our food.
- b. Eating too much solid fat can raise cholesterol. *Show class the model of plaque buildup on artery walls and describe how solid fats (saturated and trans fats) can raise cholesterol which can form plaques on artery walls making the area where blood travels become very narrow.*
- c. Eating too many calories can lead to weight gain.
- d. High sodium intake is related to high prevalence of high blood pressure in the United States.
- e. Weight gain and high blood pressure can lead to serious disease such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and some cancers. Many of these health problems require medication or special diets which are sometimes necessary for the rest of life.

At this point, it might be important to emphasize that fast food is not the cause of these serious health issues, but rather a potential source of excess calories, fat, and sodium.

8. Slide 8: Fast Food Facts: Portion Sizes

- a. Portions have increased over the years. With increasing portions come more calories. *Have students guess how many calories are in a large order of fries today.*
- b. There has been a 400 calorie increase in a serving of fries.

9. Slide 9: Americans Are Eating More

- a. Today Americans are eating more than they need. On average most people consume an extra 200 (approximately the amount in a 20 oz soda) calories every day. This is one reason why people are gaining weight.

10. Slide 10: You Do the Math

Have students guess how many pounds of weight are gained in 1 year by eating 200 extra calories every day.

- a. $200 \text{ calories} \times \underline{\hspace{2cm}} \text{ days in a year (365)} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}} \text{ calories/year (73,000)}$. *Ask students to calculate answer.*
- b. There are 3500 calories in 1 pound. 73,000 calories in a year divided by 3500 calories equals the number of pounds gained in one year (20). *Have students calculate answer.*

11. Slide 11: Energy Balance

- a. Energy balance is like a scale – it has two sides. One side is “calories in” and the other is “calories out.” *Ask students how we get “calories in” (i.e., eating and drinking things with calories) and “calories out” (physical activity and metabolic functions like breathing, heart beating, digesting food, etc.).*
- b. When calories in equal calories out, we can maintain a healthy weight. *Ask students what happens when there is an imbalance.*

- c. While we have little control over our metabolism, we can control how active we are. *Ask students how much time it would take to burn 400 calories by walking. Remind them that physical activity is important for everyone.*
- d. The answer is 1 hour and 10 minutes. *Explain that this information is based on someone who is 160 pounds, so if you are smaller it may take even longer to burn the calories by walking.*

12. Slide 12: Maintaining a Healthy Weight

- a. There are ways to maintain a healthy weight.
 - i. Adolescents and children (ages 6-17) should be physically active every day for 60 minutes.
 - ii. Enjoy your food, but eat less – especially foods that are high in solid fats and added sugars (like cakes, cookies, ice cream, candies, sweetened drinks, pizza, and fatty meats like ribs, sausages, bacon, and hot dogs). While sodium does not contain calories, it is also important to cut back on foods high in salt.
 - iii. Calories can add up quickly, making it easy to eat more than our bodies need. *If time allows, review the examples of 200 calories with the students and ways to reduce or substitute these things.*
 - 1 chocolate cream filled cupcake – have one once a week instead of every day
 - 20 chocolate coated peanut candies – grab some grapes instead
 - 5 chicken nuggets – don't have as a daily snack – make them a treat
 - 1 large chocolate chip cookie - eat half or have fruit for dessert
 - 1 fast food medium regular soda (20 oz) – choose water or a small instead

13. Slide 13: Fast Food Makeover: Before

- a. The graph represents the amount of fat in each part of the meal.
- b. *Have the students guess how many calories and fat grams they think are in the meal. Remind them that the average person needs about 2000 calories in a whole day. Once they see the answers, discuss sources of fat (cheese, beef, French fries, ingredients in milkshake).*

14. Slide 14: Fast Food Makeover: After

- a. *Have students guess how many calories and how much fat are in the meal. The graph shows a comparison of the fat in the “before” and “after” meals. The “after” meal cut out a lot of fat just by having cheeseburger instead of a quarter pound burger with cheese (smaller portion), a smaller portion of fries (smaller portion), and water instead of a milkshake (substitution).*

15. Slide 15: Some Fat Is Good!

- a. Even though the solid fats often found in fast food can lead to many health problems, we need some healthy fats in moderation for important functions in our bodies.
- b. *Ask students, “What are the benefits of fat?”*
 - i. Helps cushion organs and protect the body.
 - ii. Needed as an energy source for the body.
 - iii. Needed to absorb vitamins A, D, E, and K.
- c. *Ask students, “What foods have fats that are good for the body?”* Certain types of fat (mono- and polyunsaturated fats) are better for the body than the solid fats often found in fast food. Examples include vegetable oils, tree nuts, and fish.

16. Slide 16: Healthy Hints

- a. Try vegetables on pizza – choose fatty meat toppings less often
- b. Choose grilled chicken – cut back on fried foods
- c. Avoid oversized portions – choose a smaller size option
- d. Be creative – try baked potato, side salads, bean burritos, or frozen yogurt – make half your plate fruits and vegetables

e. *Ask students, “What other healthy hints do you have?”*

17. Slide 17: Activity: Fast Food Makeover

- a. *Distribute Fast Food Nutrition Guides and “Fast Food Makeover” worksheet. Review how to use the guide, specifically where to find the amount of calories and total fat. If Fast Food Nutrition Guides are not available, distribute menu packets and focus the activity on total grams of fat only.*
- b. *Have the students select a burger restaurant, a pizza restaurant, a Chinese restaurant, and a restaurant of their choice from the guide. Students should first select a meal that they would normally choose from each restaurant and record the amount of calories and fat. After they have determined the total calories and fat in the meal and recorded those numbers on the worksheet, they should makeover their meal so that it has no more than 600 calories and 25 grams of total fat. Students can make substitutions or choose smaller portions.*
- c. *Ask some students to volunteer to read their original menus and then their meal makeovers. Was it difficult for them to choose a meal with less than 600 calories and 25 grams of fat? Would they actually eat this meal that they selected for the meal makeover? Is it possible to eat healthier at fast food restaurants?*

Alternate Activity: Where’s the Fat?

- a. Activity Preparation:
 - i. *Use the meal cards to make up containers of shortening to be used in the lesson. There are six separate meals so you will need six containers of shortening. Figure out how many total grams of fat are in each meal.*
 - ii. *For every 5 grams of fat in the meal, measure 1 teaspoon of shortening. Fill each of the containers with shortening according to how many grams of fat are in the meal.*
 - iii. *Mark each container with the corresponding letter so that you know what containers represent which meal.*
- b. Procedure for student(s):
 - iv. *Give each student a “Where’s the Fat Guessing Card.” They need to estimate how many total grams of fat they think are in the meal and then look at the six different containers of shortening and figure out which meal matches which container.*
 - v. *You may give the hint that 5 grams of fat is equal to 1 teaspoon of shortening.*
 - vi. *Reveal the correct letter and the correct amount of fat for each meal, asking for participation and guessing from the class and the group that prepared the plate. Also talk about the calories since this was listed on their original meal cards.*
- c. Discussion points/questions to ask:
 - i. *The meals can be thought of as pairs – R and L, Q and F, Y and W. For each pair, they both came from the same restaurant and are very similar. But, one is a healthier option.*
 - ii. *Ask students, “Is white or dark meat chicken a better choice?” White meat chicken/turkey has less fat than dark. Ask students, “What can you do to fried chicken to cut down on fat and calories?” Taking off the skin because it contains lots of fat.*
 - iii. *Order smaller portions of the same type of food (small fry vs. large fry) or substitute lower calorie/fat/sodium foods for the high fat/high calorie items. Ask students, “What are some of the healthier side dishes that you have seen?” Try fruit and yogurt parfaits, fruit cups, side salads. Small fry = 230 calories, 11g fat vs. fruit and yogurt parfait = 160 calories, 2g fat.*
 - iv. *Get some vegetables when you can – veggies on pizza instead of meat, side salad or green beans instead of a biscuit. Ask students, “Why are vegetables important?”*

- v. What about beverages? A small soda has fewer calories than a large. One could also choose water, diet soda, or 100% juice. *Ask students*, “Is orange drink the same as 100% orange juice?”

18. Slide 18: The Fast Food Facts

Summarize the main points of the lesson.

- a. Make Healthier Choices
 - i. Lower calorie, fat, and sodium foods
 - ii. Smaller Portions
- b. Remember Energy Balance
 - i. Get your physical activity
 - ii. Balance the calories you need with the calories you eat

VI. Conclusion of Lesson:

- A. Distribute hand wipes.
- B. Provide each student with a food tasting and encourage him or her to make small changes in his or her diet now. Explain why this food is a healthy option.
- C. Distribute the reinforcement read the message and/or explain the reason why they are receiving the reinforcement.
- D. Thank the students for their participation and answer any questions the students have.
- E. Distribute Caregiver Newsletters

VII. Extension Lessons:

- A. How to be Fat Wise
- B. The Scoop on Fast Food
- C. Fast Food in Your Community



Funded by the Pennsylvania (PA) Department of Human Services (DHS) through PA Nutrition Education Tracks, a part of USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). To find out how SNAP can help you buy healthy foods, contact the DHS toll-free Helpline at 800-692-7462 or 215-430-0556. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Where's the Fat?

Guessing Card

Meal	Plate letter you believe represents the amount of fat in this meal	Total Fat in Product (g) (Your guess, based on the amount of shortening on the plate)
Big burger with toppings, large fries, medium soda		
Cheeseburger, small fries, small soda		
2 pieces fried chicken (breast and thigh), mashed potatoes with gravy, biscuit, medium soda		
1 piece fried chicken (breast), mashed potatoes with NO gravy, green beans, small soda		
2 slices pan pizza with pepperoni, medium soda		
2 slices thin crust pizza with mushrooms, small soda		

Remember: 5 grams of fat = 1 teaspoon of shortening



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Meal R	Calories	Fat grams
Big burger with toppings	560	30
Large Fries	520	25
Medium soda	210	0
Total		

Meal L	Calories	Fat grams
Cheeseburger	310	12
Small fries	230	11
Small soda	150	0
Total		

Meal Q	Calories	Fat grams
2 pieces fried chicken (breast and thigh)	650	42
Mashed potatoes w/ gravy	120	6
Biscuit	180	24
Medium regular soda	210	0
Total		

Meal F	Calories	Fat grams
1 piece fried chicken (breast)	400	24
Mashed potatoes with no gravy	102	4
Green beans	50	1.5
Small regular soda	150	0
Total		

Meal Y	Calories	Fat grams
2 slices pan pizza with pepperoni	580	30
Medium soda	180	0
Total		

Meal W	Calories	Fat grams
2 slices thin crust pizza with mushrooms	340	12
Small regular soda	140	0
Total		



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Where's the Fat Activity: Fast Food Lesson

Answers to group meal cards

Meal R	Calories	Fat grams
Big burger with toppings	560	30
Large fries	520	25
Medium soda	210	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>1290</i>	<i>55</i>

Meal L	Calories	Fat grams
Cheeseburger	310	12
Small fries	230	11
Small soda	150	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>690</i>	<i>23</i>

Meal Q	Calories	Fat grams
2 pieces fried chicken (breast and thigh)	650	42
Mashed potatoes w/ gravy	120	6
Biscuit	180	24
Medium regular soda	210	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>1160</i>	<i>72</i>

Meal F	Calories	Fat grams
1 piece fried chicken (breast)	400	24
Mashed potatoes with no gravy	102	4
Green beans	50	1.5
Small regular soda	150	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>702</i>	<i>29.5</i>

Meal Y	Calories	Fat grams
2 slices pan pizza with pepperoni	580	30
Medium soda	180	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>760</i>	<i>30</i>

Meal W	Calories	Fat grams
2 slices thin crust pizza with mushrooms	340	12
Small soda	140	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>480</i>	<i>12</i>



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Fast Food: Figuring Out the Facts

Circle or fill in the best answer as the instructor goes through the slides. The instructor will go over the correct answers.

1. Which meal has the least amount of fat?

Meal #1, Meal #2, or Meal #3 (circle one)

2. What changes can be made to Meal #2 to make it a healthier option?

3. On Average, how many times a week are Americans dining out? _____

4. How many pounds a year are gained by eating an extra 200 calories every day for 1 year?

200 calories X _____ days in 1 year = _____ extra calories in 1 year

_____ extra calories in 1 year ÷ 3500 calories in 1 pound = _____ pounds in 1 year

5. Name 3 examples of what 200 calories equal.

6. What 3 nutrients or things is fast food generally high in?

7. Weight gain and high blood pressure can be risk factors for 4 types of serious disease. What are these 4 diseases?

8. List 5 healthier choices that you can make at a fast food restaurant.



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Name: _____

Date: _____



Fast Food Makeover

Using the *Fast Food Nutrition Guide*, find the menu for one restaurant where you like to eat. Choose 3 items from the menu that you might typically order and write them in the box below. Look up the amount of calories and fat in each of your items and then add up the totals for your meal.

Example: Menu from a Burger Restaurant:

Menu Item	Calories	Grams of Fat
Quarter Pound Burger w/ Cheese	510	26
Large French Fries	500	25
Chocolate Milkshake	580	14
Totals:	1590	65

My Menu from: _____ (Burger Restaurant)

Menu Item	Calories	Grams of Fat
Totals:		

Now try to makeover your meal by choosing healthier items. Choose 3 items from the same menu that add up to less than 600 calories and less than 25 grams of total fat and write them in the box.

Example: Healthier Menu Makeover from a Burger Restaurant:

Menu Item	Calories	Grams of Fat
Cheeseburger	300	12
Small French Fries	230	11
Bottle of Water	0	0
Totals:	530	23

My Healthier Menu Makeover from: _____

Menu Item	Calories	Grams of Fat
Totals:		



Now that you've seen how to cut back on the amount of calories and fat in your fast food meal, try to makeover a meal from a pizza restaurant, a Chinese restaurant, and one restaurant of your choice. Remember that your healthier menu should add up to less than 600 calories and less than 25 grams of total fat.

My Menu from: _____ (Pizza Restaurant)

Menu Item	Calories	Grams of Fat
Totals:		



My Healthier Menu Makeover from: _____

Menu Item	Calories	Grams of Fat
Totals:		

My Menu from: _____ (Chinese Restaurant)

Menu Item	Calories	Grams of Fat
Totals:		



My Healthier Menu Makeover from: _____

Menu Item	Calories	Grams of Fat
Totals:		

My Menu from: _____ (Your Choice)

Menu Item	Calories	Grams of Fat
Totals:		



My Healthier Makeover Menu from: _____

Menu Item	Calories	Grams of Fat
Totals:		

