

# Low sodium eating at fast food restaurants

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## Can my child eat at fast food restaurants on a low sodium (salt) diet?

Yes, your child can eat at fast food restaurants if you follow these guidelines.

- Your child should only have between 1,000 and 2,000 milligrams (mg) of sodium each day.
- To stay on target, they should eat less than 500 mg sodium per meal and 150 to 250 mg sodium per snack.
- Low sodium foods are less than 10 mg sodium per serving. Avoid adding salt to these foods.
- Sometimes, you may be able to ask for “no added salt.”

## What breakfast foods are low in sodium?

Your child can try any of these:

- Scrambled eggs
- Unsalted hash browns
- Oatmeal
- English muffins
- Pancakes
- Yogurt
- Fruit cup

Your child should avoid biscuits and breakfast meats, such as sausage, bacon and ham. They are very high in sodium.

## What lunch and dinner foods are low in sodium?

Your child can try any of the foods listed here.

### Hamburgers

- Plain hamburgers are low in sodium.
- Leave off high sodium toppings, such as pickles, bacon, special sauce and extra cheese.
- Limit other condiments like mustard and ketchup to 1 packet.

### Submarine (sub) sandwiches

- Choose chicken or turkey instead of ham or roast beef.
- Your child can reduce the amount of sodium they get by ordering a mini-sub or leaving off pickles, cheese and sauces.

**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**

## **Low sodium eating at fast food restaurants, continued**

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### **Pizza**

- Cheese and toppings can have a lot of sodium.
- Avoid toppings, such as pepperoni, sausage, ham, anchovies and olives.
- Choose low sodium toppings, such as onions, green peppers, tomatoes, broccoli, spinach and mushrooms.
- Choose thin crust over regular.
- Stick to 1 to 2 slices. Have a salad or fruit on the side.

### **Chicken**

- Grilled, baked and broiled chicken are low in sodium and fine for your child to eat.
- Fried chicken has added sodium in the batter. Remove the skin. Limit your child to 1 piece to reduce the amount of sodium they get.
- Sauce can also have added sodium. Limit sauce to 1 packet.

### **Chinese food**

- Sauces used in Chinese food are most often high in sodium.
- Do not use soy sauce, including low sodium sauce.
- Order steamed rice instead of fried rice.

### **Mexican food**

- Most Mexican foods are high in sodium.
- Your child can eat tacos or a burrito bowl with toppings, such as fresh onion, lettuce, sour cream, diced tomatoes and bell peppers.
- Salad, rice, refried beans, guacamole and corn tortillas also tend to be low in sodium.
- Choose Tabasco sauce instead of original hot sauce. Original hot sauce can be high in sodium.

### **French fries or baked potato**

- If your child does not have to limit the amount of potassium they get, they can eat small size French fries without salt. Most restaurants will make them without salt when asked.
- Baked potatoes are also low in sodium. Add sour cream and chives to add flavor.

### **Salads**

- Salads without meat and side salads are low in sodium.
- Choose lite vinaigrettes instead of regular salad dressing like Ranch, Blue Cheese or Thousand Island.

## **What drinks are low in sodium?**

- Your child can have water, soda, iced tea and 100% juice.
- Avoid sports drinks, such as Gatorade and Powerade. They have high amounts of sodium.
- Order small sizes for milk and milkshakes.

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## **Low sodium eating at fast food restaurants, continued**

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### **What desserts are low in sodium?**

- Your child can have frozen yogurt in a cup or cone, parfaits and cookies.
- Pies are high in sodium. Only allow your child to eat half of a piece of pie.
- Choose small or child-sized desserts when possible.

### **Who should I call if I have questions about low sodium eating at fast food restaurants?**

Call your child's nutritionist or doctor if you have questions.

**This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.**

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