Shape Up Your Workplace
A monthly series brought to you by Get Healthy CT

Workplace Wellness Idea #30:
Choose Healthier Fast Food Options

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will provide a "Workplace Wellness Idea" each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

Make Healthier Food Choices

There may be days where it is difficult to find the time for a sit down meal. On those days, you may have no choice but to get in the drive-thru lane for something quick. Consuming fast food regularly can have a negative impact on your health, so the key is moderation. You should limit the amount of fast food meals you eat and learn how to order the healthier items on the menu. Get Healthy CT has put together some helpful information to help you learn how to make healthier fast food choices.

Tips for Selecting Healthier Fast Food Items

Control Your Portion Size: Many fast food meals are large enough to make several meals. Avoid supersized and value-sized items, and go for the smallest size available. You can order from the children's menu for reasonable portion sizes.

Select Grilled or Roasted Meats: Avoid fried and breaded items, such as crispy chicken and breaded fish fillets. Also, try to avoid processed meats such as sausage, bacon, hot dogs, or ham. Better options when available, are turkey or grilled chicken breast.

Read Descriptions Carefully: Dishes which are labeled as deep-fried, pan-fried, basted, batter-dipped, breaded, creamy, crispy, scalloped, or au gratin are usually high in calories, have unhealthy fats, and are loaded with sodium.

Choose Healthier Salads: Be careful when ordering salads, as many fast food salads are loaded with high calorie and high fat toppings. Go without the bacon, extra cheese and ask for salad dressing on the side. Oil and vinegar is a good option.

More Tips for Selecting Healthier Fast Food Items

- ✓ **Be careful when it comes to condiments and dressings.** When choosing items, be aware of calorie-packed salad dressings, spreads, sauces, and sides. Mayonnaise and oil-based sauces in particular add a lot of calories. Try holding the mayo and asking for mustard or a packet you can add yourself to help control how much you put on your sandwich.

- ✓ **Watch what you drink.** Soda is a source of hidden sugar and calories. The average large soda has around 300 calories and 19 spoonfuls of sugar. Shakes are even worse, with up to 800 calories and a staggering 120 grams (30 spoonfuls) of sugar. Switching to diet soda isn't the answer, as the artificial sweetener it contains can trigger sugar cravings that contribute to weight gain. And don't be fooled by lemonade and fruit drinks, which add calories and sugar without much in the way of nutrients. Order water or unsweetened tea or coffee instead.

- ✓ **Be wise about sides.** Watch menu items that come with one or more side dishes. Sides that can quickly send calories soaring include fries, chips, rice, noodles, onion rings, coleslaw, macaroni and cheese, biscuits, and mashed potatoes with gravy. Better bets are side salads with light dressing, baked potato (easy on the toppings), fresh fruit cups, corn on the cob, or apple slices.

- ✓ **Pass on the French fries.** Do you really need those fries? A sandwich or burger should be plenty filling on its own. If you need a side, try fruit, steamed vegetables or a garden salad.

- ✓ **Skip the bacon.** It's always tempting to add bacon to sandwiches and salads for extra flavor, but processed meat has very few nutrients and is high in fat and calories. Instead, try ordering extra pickles, onions, lettuce, tomatoes, or mustard to add flavor in a healthier way.

Source: http://www.helpguide.org/articles/healthy-eating/healthy-fast-food.htm

For more information, please visit GetHealthyCT.org
Let's *work together to help make the healthy choice the easy choice in the workplace!*