

News Article for Week of: January 14, 2010

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Add Up the Savings

Rev up your 2010 \$\$\$\$ savings engine by starting in the nutrition fast lane! Eating out takes a big bite out of family food budgets and becomes one of the best places to immediately start saving money and getting better value for you bucks! Making smart menu choices requires selecting the best value for your money – not just in quantity of food per price, but the value amount of calories and real nutrition you actually get with your purchase. Consider these points when scanning the menu during your next “drive thru” or “sit down” restaurant visit:

1. Eating out is costly. Try to limit the number of meals you eat in restaurants.
2. Try eating your appetizer or your dessert and coffee at home. Dessert is one of the most marked up menu items.
3. Think small. Order only what you can eat. It is not a bargain to supersize only to leave the extra on your plate.
4. Share French fries or other sides and save both money and calories.
5. Drink water. It is usually free and good for you too.
6. Bring your lunch to work. Use leftovers from the previous night and save more than \$1,000 a year.
7. Eat earlier in the day. Restaurant meals become more expensive as the day is closer to dinner.
8. Look for lunch specials.

9. Avoid vending machines and convenience store snacks. Keep healthy snacks with you or in your office.
10. Order the smallest size drink. Most restaurants offer free refills.
11. Don't use extra gasoline waiting in the drive – through lane. Park the car and go inside. You will get a little exercise too.
12. Always ask for a box to take home leftovers. Take them for lunch the next day or actually feed them to a dog.
13. If you enjoy eating out, plan for the expense as part of your food budget. Know how much you have to spend on food, including meals in restaurants, and stick to it.

To help make the best choices, your Allen County Cooperative Extension Service is offering you a FREE “Nutrition in the Fast Lane” menu guide – a handbook for fast food and casual dining including over 64 restaurants and 3200 menu items – to help you evaluate calories, fat per selection, etc. This handy guide to keep in your car or truck, gym bag, or bag can give you comparison info per restaurant and item that will help make smart choices for good health and budget savings! Stop by the Extension Office at 200 East Main Street to get your copy, receive a free lunch bag and register during January for a free \$25.00 SONIC Gift Card – a great way to get your savings started!

In the coming months, the Extension Service will be offering special promotions and tips that will help you “Add Up the Savings” with Energy, Growing Your Own Food, When Shopping For Food, and When Preparing For Food. Be sure and check out our website <http://ces.ca.uky.edu/allen/> for more information and additional tips to save money in 2010!

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