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## SUMMER NUTRITION—IN THE FAST (FOOD) LANE

As summer approaches, we generally look forward to things slowing down a little in our busy lives. And I think it is very important to our health to make sure it does. However, for some reason, we do not slow it down enough to do more home-cooked healthful meals. Therefore, many Americans are still driving through those fast food restaurants, with children in tow, nourishing themselves on their way to the beach, or before they're off to a summer evening movie. Does this sound like your family?

I am here to tell you that there is a healthful way! Fast food does not have to be deadly—or off limits forever. If you are trying to lead a healthier lifestyle, choose some of these ideas. Mind you, I am not suggesting that three days a week should be a fast food stop—I think there are limits—once every couple of weeks sounds reasonable to me.

First, and foremost, *get out of the car!* Do not drive through that drive-thru lane. If you're going to indulge, please *walk* in and out of the restaurant. At least, you are doing something that is healthy for your heart! Next, be cautious of the very worst foods—french fries, onion rings, chicken nuggets and other items that are fried. Most frying is still done in partially hydrogenated vegetable oil, the most dangerous fat ever created. Many hamburgers are fried, as well, such as McDonald's and Wendy's. Please inquire.

So what are the healthier choices besides the “salads”, of which we are all very aware. Of course, use the dressings sparingly, and order the salads with some protein, such as chicken or fish. Additionally, choose grilled chicken sandwiches, or sub sandwiches (omit cheese and mayonnaise)--with turkey or lean roast beef (many Subway Restaurants serve baked chips, too). Also, identify the fast food restaurants (for example, Burger King) who char-broils or barbeques their hamburgers, rather than frying them on a grill. Restaurants such as Boston Market, Pollo Tropical and Chicken Grill are healthy spots in which to eat grilled chicken and/or turkey; order healthy side dishes such as vegetables, beans, and corn on the cob. There are unique little spots serving “wraps”, which are gaining popularity across the country. Again, these are healthier sandwiches, especially when choosing lean cold cuts. Don't forget—most places serving sandwiches now have whole wheat breads, too.

Make it a healthful summer—swim laps, go hiking or biking, dance, and remember to think about those fast food choices—they can be better.

Yours, Ronni