

Eating Healthy In A World Of Processed Foods

Too much of a good thing can be bad- at least that's what some people believe. We're living in an age now where food is so unbelievably accessible that we find ourselves scoffing under our breath if we're in a fast food line for more than sixty-seconds. The speed and convenience is great at times- especially for busy moms and people running from job one to job two. But too much of this has contributed to a worldwide epidemic of obesity, which is growing worse with time.

Learning to balance healthy living in a world of processed foods isn't impossible. While combo meals (what a deal!) and tempting propaganda can sometimes make healthy feel unattainable, it's not. It just takes a little planning ahead of time and reinforcement of better choices. So what are some things you can do to eat healthy amidst a world of processed foods?

Steam, Bake or Broil- If you take a food item in its rawest form, it has the potential to stay healthy. But the way you prepare it can be a deal breaker. Stay away from food that is fried or cooked in a batter. This applies to vegetables too, not just meats.

Get it on the Side- If you order a salad or a dish that comes with a sauce, ask for it to be served on the side. That way, you can determine how much you consume, or if you even really like the taste enough to consume the calories.

Inquire about Substitutions- If your dish comes with a side of fries, ask if you can get a baked potato instead. Restaurants are often very willing to make substitutions.

Plan Ahead- Choose a day or days of the week and designate them as food preparation days. Use these days to make several days' worth of healthy foods to bring with you to work, school, or wherever. That way, when lunch hour rolls around, you won't be tempted with a McDonalds run.

Ask for Less- If you're ordering a sandwich, for example, which comes with barbeque sauce, ask that the waiter goes "light" on the sauce. By doing this, you will save small amounts of calories in each food item you order.

Minimize the Toppings- When ordering fast-food, stick to menu items that have the least amount of non-vegetable toppings. Try to pass on the calorie-heavy condiments and instead ask for extra vegetables. More filling, less calories.

Be a Kid Again- Order off the kids menu. The serving sizes are smaller and oftentimes, the side "dish" is a fruit or vegetable, instead of a French fry or the like.

In the perfect world, we wouldn't find ourselves in a line of cars at a fast-food restaurant or dragging the family out to a local diner for Tuesday night dinner. Love it or hate it, processed

foods are a large part of our society, but that doesn't mean we have to be food hermits. There is a way to make processed foods more health-friendly by making small, conscious choices each time you find yourself speaking into that talking black box.