

LESSON 6: The Economics of Food

Student Learning Objectives

The students will:

- Examine ways to select healthy foods at fast food restaurants.
- Explore food costs and identify ways to lower costs and eat nutritious foods.
- Explore the costs of school lunches.
- Identify ways to improve the school lunch menu without increasing the costs.

Preparation

- Gather the needed materials.
- Duplicate enough copies of the week's lunch menus from the school cafeteria so that each small group will have a copy.
- Decide how you will divide your class into small groups with four or five students in each group. These groups will work together for the entire lesson.
- Prepare a transparency from the Transparency Master, Recommendations for Eating at Fast Food Restaurants, if one has not been provided for you.
- Display the Nutrition Resource Packets on a reference table.
- In preparation for Activity 3, talk with your School Child Nutrition Services Director to learn about parameters and restrictions related to food service. Consider conducting the Optional Activity which invites your School Child Nutrition Services Director to talk with the class.

Materials

Equipment

- Overhead projector and screen

Resources

- Pamphlet: *Healthful Eating All Around Town, OR Eating Out & Eating Healthy*, American Dietetic Association, classroom set
- Pamphlet: *Guide to Dining Out*, United Dairy Industry of Michigan, classroom set
- Transparency Master: Recommendations for Eating at Fast Food Restaurants
- Transparency Master: Recommendations for Eating on a Budget
- Transparency Master: School Lunches—Are They a Good Deal?
- Nutrition Resource Packets, three
- Student Worksheet: Fast Food: Making It a Healthy Choice (from Lesson 1)
- Resource Person: School Child Nutrition Services Director (Optional)

Realia

- Pens or pencils
- Writing paper
- Transparencies
- Folders or notebooks (from Lesson 1)

Time: 45 minutes, without the Optional Activity

Lesson Procedure

Introduction: 1 minute

Connect this lesson on the economics of food selection to the previous lesson on nutrition practices in special situations.

1. Tell the students:

We have discussed many different ways to apply good nutrition practices. However, nutrition information may not be the only criteria for what foods we select. Availability and cost may also influence our decisions.

Today, we will look at how to eat healthfully at fast food establishments and on a budget.

Activity 1: 15 minutes

Examine ways to select healthy foods at fast food restaurants.

1. Ask the students to get out their Student Worksheet, Fast Food: Making It a Healthy Choice.
2. Divide the class into small groups with four or five students in each group. They should take their Student Worksheets with them to their small group. Assign the group roles: leader, spokesperson, recorder. Explain:
 - The leader will help lead the small group discussion.
 - The spokesperson will share the small group's ideas with the class.
 - The recorder will take notes on the ideas generated in the small group.
3. Distribute the pamphlets *Guide to Dining Out and Healthful Eating All Aound Town* OR *Eating Out & Eating Healthy* to each student. Display the transparency, Recommendations for Eating at Fast Food Restaurants, and explain the small task:
 - Discuss what they have learned about the caloric content and fat content of their favorite fast food meal.
 - Share the menus they created for eating healthfully at their favorite fast food restaurant and what criteria they used to create a healthy menu.
 - Synthesize their learnings into three or four recommendations for eating at fast food restaurants.
 - Allow ten minutes. The spokespersons will share the recommendations with the class.
4. After ten minutes, call on the spokespersons to share their group's ideas. Emphasize the following points:
 - The caloric content and fat content of fast food meals can add up quickly.
 - It is possible to choose items that are more nutritious and will help maintain a weight management plan.
 - Eating at fast food restaurants is okay on occasion.
 - Eating high-calorie, high-fat meals at a fast food restaurant on a daily basis can be problematic and can have serious effects on health.
 - How food is prepared can alter its nutrient content. For example, a baked potato is higher in nutrient content than French fries.