

# Fast-Food Breakfast: Best and Worst

Presented by GISI's Wellness  
Committee

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## Sorting Out the Healthiest Options

While plenty of high-fat and high-calorie breakfast choices abound at fast-food restaurants, most chains offer at least one or two items that are healthier. Here are some of the worst menu items at several major chains and suggested substitutes to consider if you find yourself at the drive-through. GISI doesn't endorse these "better bets"; some still may be too high in sodium or calories for your diet.



## McDonald's: Worst Choices

Pass on the Deluxe Breakfast with a regular or large biscuit and the Big Breakfast because they can set you back a minimum of 790 calories, 51 g fat, and 18 g saturated fat.



## McDonald's: Better Bet

Your better alternative under the golden arches is the Egg McMuffin (300 calories, 12 g fat, 5 g saturated fat, 2 g fiber, 820 mg sodium). To help make the healthiest choices at McDonald's or any other fast-food chain, ask for a nutrition information brochure at the counter or check out the web site. Look for items that contain some fiber and protein that will keep you feeling satisfied for hours and don't have too much sugar, sodium, or saturated or total fat.



## Burger King: Worst Choice

Skip the Enormous Omelet Sandwich (730 calories, 45 g fat, 16 g saturated fat, and 1,949 mg sodium) containing an omelet on a specialty bun topped with bacon, sausage, and cheese -- a high-calorie, high-fat, high-sodium sandwich containing almost a day's worth of fat and sodium.



## Burger King: Better Bet

Choose the Ham Omelet Sandwich (290 calories, 13 g fat, 4.5 g saturated fat, 870 mg sodium, and 1 g fiber) for a breakfast that will help keep you feeling full until lunch.



## Jack in the Box: Worst Choice

Even though it sounds healthy, the Sirloin Steak & Egg Burrito with Fire Roasted Tomato Salsa has a whopping 790 calories, 48 g fat, and 5 g saturated fat along with 6 g fiber.



## Jack in the Box: Better Bets

Take your pick and enjoy a Breakfast Jack (290 calories, 12 g fat, 4.5 g saturated fat, 760 mg sodium and 1 g fiber) sandwich with a slice of ham, cheese and an egg, or for a few more fat calories, make it a Bacon Breakfast Jack (300 calories, 14 g fat, 5 g saturated fat, 728 mg sodium, and 1 g fiber).



## Skip Carl's Junior for Breakfast

French Toast Dips with syrup are the better bet but hardly healthy. Worst bets include the Breakfast Burger loaded with a burger, egg, bacon, cheese, and hash brown nuggets (830 calories, 47 g fat, 15 g saturated fat, 1,580 mg sodium, and 3 g fiber) or the hard-to-hold Loaded Breakfast Burrito bursting with scrambled eggs, sausage, bacon, 2 cheeses, and salsa wrapped in a tortilla (820 calories, 51 g fat, 16 g saturated fat, 1,530 mg sodium, and 2 grams fiber).



## Dunkin' Donuts: Worst Choices

Stay away from the decadent, more like over-the-top desserts, Triple Chocolate Muffin (660 calories, 33 g fat, 7 g saturated fat, 4 g fiber) or Peanut Butter Cup Cookie (590 calories, 29 g fat, 13 g saturated fat, and 3 g fiber).



## Dunkin' Donuts: Better Bets

Pair your favorite coffee with a wheat bagel (330 calories, 4 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 12 g protein, 4 g fiber) or a multigrain bagel (380 calories, 6 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 14 g protein, 5 g fiber) high in satisfying fiber and protein that will keep you going strong. Or eat half of a high-fiber Honey Bran Raisin Muffin.



## Starbucks: Worst Choices

Worst bets on the Starbucks menu include pretty much all the other high-fat, high-sugar options that won't keep you full until lunch. This includes Starbucks Classic Coffee Cake (570 calories, 28 g fat, 10 g sat fat, 7 g protein).



## Starbucks: Better Bets

Starbucks is a popular morning stop for coffee and a quick treat. Breakfast items vary by region, featuring both indulgent and healthy choices. Better bets include the Spinach Roasted Tomato, Feta & Egg Wrap (240 calories, 10 g fat, 3.5 g saturated fat, 13 g protein, 7 g fiber), the fruit and cheese platter, and any of the low-fat bran muffins, scones, and coffee cake.



## Subway: Worst Choice

You won't lose weight if you opt for our pick for the worst choice, the 6 inch Chipotle Steak & Cheese Breakfast Sandwich (600 calories, 32 g fat, 11 g saturated fat, 1,470 mg sodium, 6 g fiber).



## Subway: Better Bets

Enjoy a Cheese Breakfast Sandwich (410 calories, 18 g fat, 8 g saturated fat, 23 g protein, 1,010 mg sodium, 5 g fiber) on a 6 inch whole grain roll piled high with veggies for a healthy high-protein, high-fiber portable meal.



## Benefits of a Healthy Morning Meal

Breakfast really is the most important meal of the day -- it gives you energy to start the day and is linked to many health benefits. Studies show that eating a healthy breakfast can help give you a nutritionally complete diet, higher in nutrients, vitamins, and minerals; better weight control; improved concentration and performance in the classroom or the boardroom; more strength and energy to engage in physical activity; and lower cholesterol levels.



## Bottom Line on Breakfast

If you find yourself at a fast-food chain in the morning, always opt for the healthiest breakfast options, or eat a smaller portion and save the other half. You can eat out healthfully, but nothing compares to the numerous breakfast options at home, from an egg and whole-wheat toast to a whole-grain breakfast parfait with fruit and yogurt.

Short on time? Pack it the night before and take it along with you.



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