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**A Guide To Making
Healthier Food Choices**

CUT THE JUNK

A Guide To Making Healthier Food Choices

This book was produced by the New York City Human Resources Administration
in partnership with the Cornell University Cooperative Extension - New York City.

INTRODUCTION

Eating too much fried, fatty and fast food can bring on obesity, diabetes and heart disease. Deciding what to eat and figuring out what's healthy can seem confusing sometimes, but the basics of eating well are not that complicated. Eating more nutritiously starts at home. Cooking meals at home has many different benefits. It's often less expensive and healthier than eating out. And cooking together with your family also means sharing quality time.

When choosing what to eat, focus on fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and lean meats, and eat less added sugars, processed food, and fast food. Making healthy choices can be as simple as grabbing an apple instead of a soda, or some nuts instead of a bag of chips. So try a new vegetable, explore a new cuisine that is different from your own, or prepare the foods that mean home to you.

By making time to cook, even just once or twice a week, you can save money and calories. This book is designed to help you make dishes at home that are healthier and cheaper than fast food. If you are a low-income family or receive food stamps, choosing to cook at home will help you stretch your food budget while making sure you eat more nutritious foods.

For more information and recipes visit www.NYC.gov and search for “healthy food” or call 311.

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Nutrition Facts

| Amount Per Serving | | Calories from Fat 110 |
|----------------------|------|-----------------------|
| | | % Daily Value* |
| Total Fat | 12g | 15% |
| Saturated Fat | 3g | 15% |
| Trans Fat | 3g | |
| Cholesterol | 30mg | 10% |
| Sodium | 20mg | 20% |
| Total Carb | 31g | 10% |
| Dietary Fiber | 0g | 0% |
| Sugars | 5g | |
| Proteins | | |
| Vitamin A | | 4% |
| Vitamin C | | 2% |
| Calcium | | 20% |
| Iron | | 4% |

*Percent Daily Values are based on a diet of 2,000 calories per day. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

| | | Calories | 0.00 | 0.00 |
|--------------------|-----------|----------|---------|------|
| Total Fat | Less than | 65g | 80g | |
| Sat Fat | Less than | 20g | 25g | |
| Cholesterol | Less than | 300mg | 300mg | |
| Sodium | Less than | 2,400mg | 2,400mg | |
| Total Carbohydrate | Less than | 300g | 275g | |
| Dietary Fiber | | 20g | 30g | |

PORTION CONTROL 32





Healthy Tip #1

make half your plate
veggies and fruits

Vegetables and fruits are full of nutrients and may help to promote good health. Choose red, orange, and dark green vegetables such as tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and broccoli.



Healthy Tip #2

add lean protein

Choose protein foods, such as lean beef and pork, or chicken, turkey, beans, or tofu. Twice a week, make seafood the protein on your plate.

Food & Cost COMPARISON

Fast food is a go-to option for many people because they think it's cheaper, but most fast food items are very unhealthy, and eating too much of them often can lead to obesity and other health risks. When you cook at home, you can make much healthier food at even lower prices than you'd pay at a fast food restaurant. Use these substitution ideas at home to save money and cut calories.

Most food in supermarkets is sold in family size portions, so you can feed your family or yourself over many days for much less than you'd spend at a fast food restaurant. Fast food only looks cheap. What you spend adds up fast, and your health may suffer for it.

* The first choices in the following comparisons represent typical costs of takeout food.

† Prices quoted are per portion, and based on actual pricing found in New York City supermarkets. Prices may vary.

Jumbo VS **Cheeseburger** **Grilled Chicken** **Sandwich**

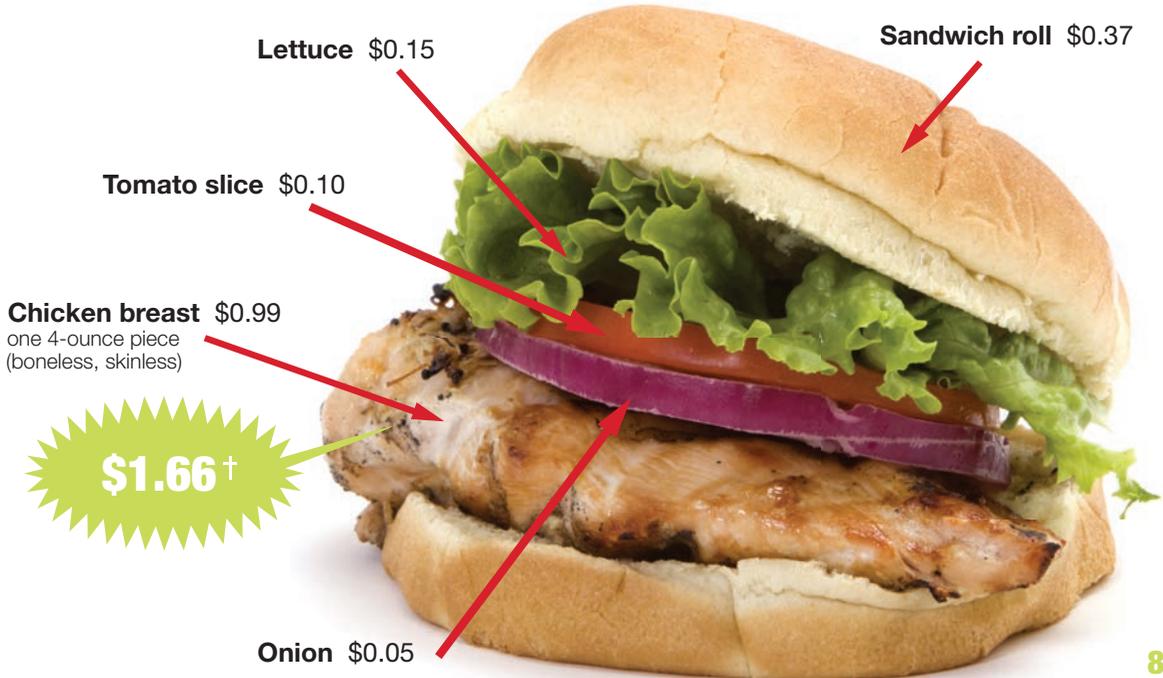
Instead of a jumbo cheeseburger, make your own grilled chicken sandwich at home with vegetables on top.



\$3.75*

Food & Cost Comparison

| Jumbo Cheeseburger | | Grilled Chicken Sandwich <small>cooked at home</small> | | Tip: <i>Use whole wheat bread to increase the fiber in your diet.</i> |
|---------------------------|-----------------|---|----------------|---|
| Calories | 750 | Calories | 250 | |
| Total fat | 39 grams | Total fat | 3 grams | |
| Sodium | 1700 mg | Sodium | 366 mg | |



Burrito VS Chicken Tacos

Instead of one large, overloaded burrito, satisfy your craving with two Grilled Chicken Tacos with healthy toppings. You'll get the same taste - without all the calories, fat and salt.



\$4.99*

Food & Cost Comparison

Burrito

Beef Burrito w/rice, black beans, sour cream, cheese, guacamole, lettuce, pico de gallo, corn, and salsa verde

Calories **1256**

Total fat **54 grams**

Two Chicken Tacos

2 Tacos w/Grilled Chicken, black beans, lettuce, salsa verde, and lowfat cheese, cooked at home

Calories **550**

Total fat **12 grams**

Tip:

To reduce the sodium content when using canned beans, rinse them before cooking.

2 taco shells with salsa \$0.66

Black beans \$0.30

Lettuce \$0.15

\$2.75[†]

Chicken breast \$0.99
one 4-ounce piece
(boneless, skinless)

Low-fat cheddar cheese \$0.65



Fast Food **VS**
French Fries
Baked Sweet Potato
Fries

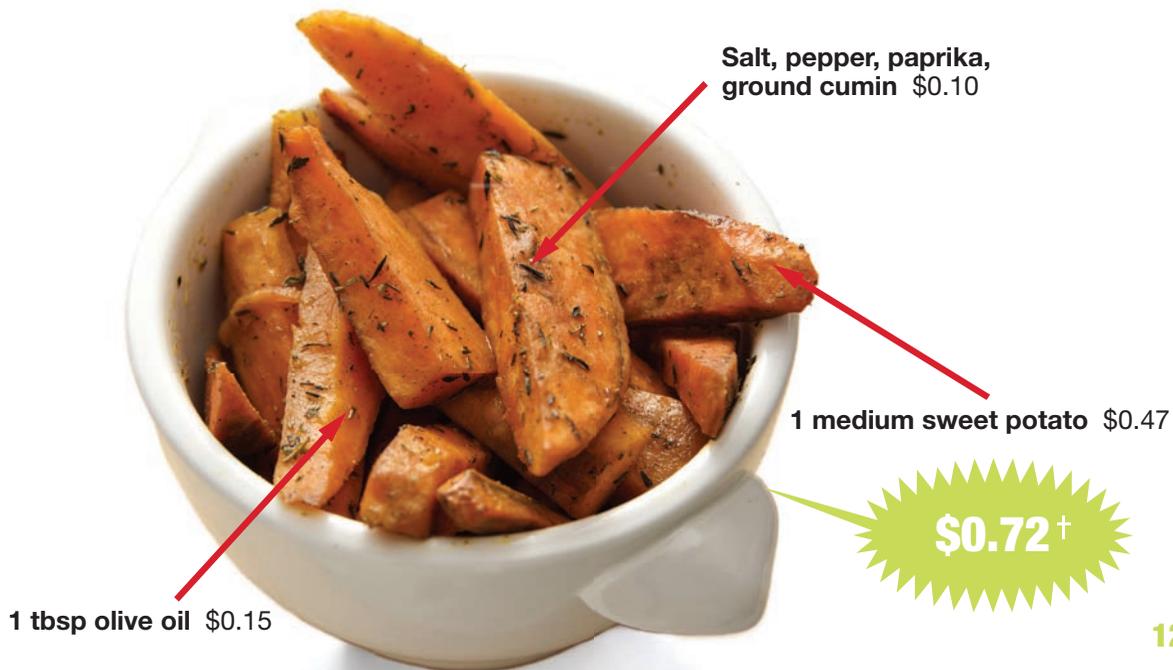
Why eat fast food French fries? Try making home-baked sweet potato fries instead. As flavorful as French fries, they have less fat and more nutrients.



\$1.00*

Food & Cost Comparison

| Fast Food French Fries | | Baked Sweet Potato w/skin cooked at home | | Tip: <i>Lightly coat potatoes with a little oil and seasoning, then bake at a high temperature until crisp.</i> |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|--|----------------|---|
| Calories | 500 | Calories | 170 | |
| Total fat | 25 grams | Total fat | 7 grams | |
| Sodium | 350 mg | Sodium | 41 mg | |



Fried Chicken VS Baked Chicken

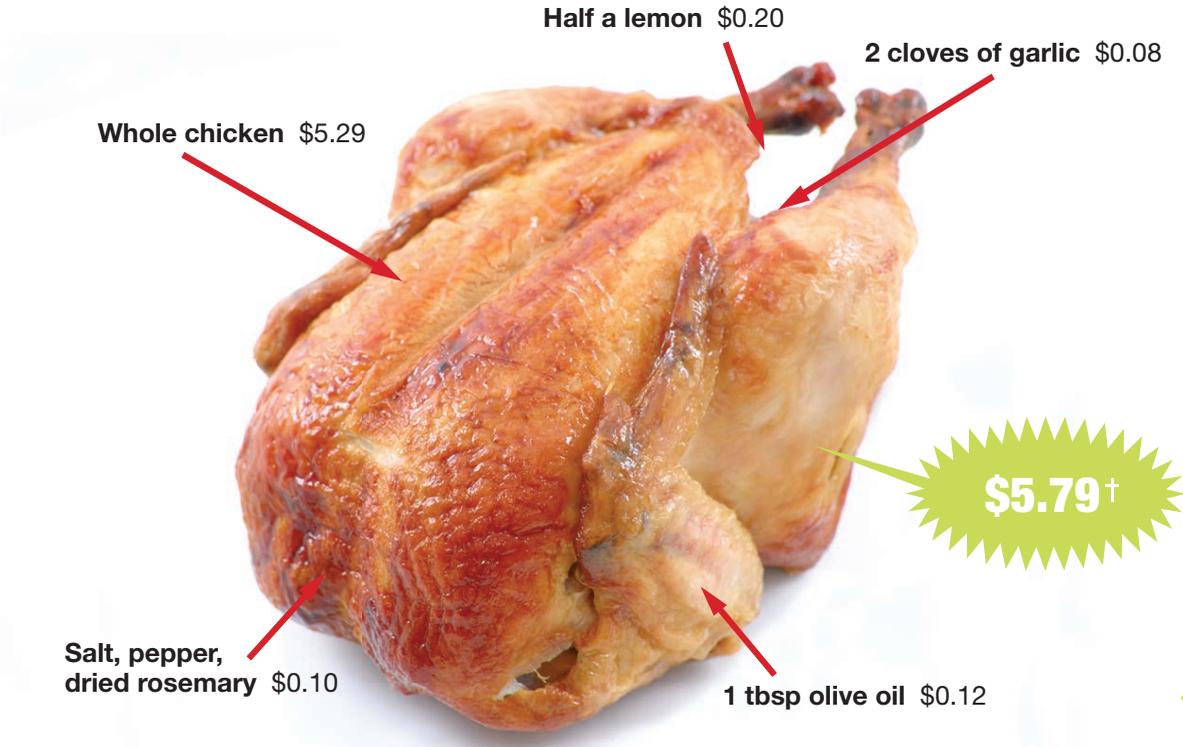
Fried chicken has lots of fat and isn't very cheap. Instead, make your family one whole chicken and bake it. You'll save money, eat healthier, and have leftovers!



\$8.99*

Food & Cost Comparison

| Fried Chicken 1 piece of fried chicken breast | Baked Chicken 1 piece of baked chicken breast cooked at home | Tip: <i>Make great meals with leftover chicken. Put shredded chicken meat on top of a salad, or add it to your vegetable & bean soup.</i> |
|---|---|---|
| Calories 340 | Calories 210 | |
| Total fat 24 grams | Total fat 9 grams | |
| Sodium 780 mg | Sodium 260 mg | |



Pasta VS **Chicken Alfredo** **Pasta Primavera** with Chicken, Zucchini and Peppers

There is a lot of fat in some pasta dishes that use cream and cheese. Make a healthier pasta dish by using vegetables, a little olive oil, garlic and seasonings.



\$9.95*

Food & Cost Comparison

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Chicken Alfredo | Pasta Primavera with Chicken, Zucchini and Peppers, cooked at home | Tip: <i>Add lots of color to your sauce using tomato sauce or fresh tomatoes with garlic and add as many vegetables as you can to the pot!</i> |
| Calories 775 | Calories 321 | |
| Total fat 43 grams | Total fat 7 grams | |

Zucchini \$0.49

Chicken breast \$0.99
one 4-ounce piece
(boneless, skinless)

1 tbsp olive oil \$0.12

Peppers \$0.38

Salt \$0.02

Pasta \$0.25
1 cup cooked pasta

\$2.25[†]

Sweet & Sour Chicken VS Chicken Vegetable Stir-fry

The next time you're in the mood for Chinese food, try making it yourself. Homemade Chicken Vegetable Stir-fry has less than half the calories and fat of take out Sweet and Sour Chicken. It's also lower in sodium, and you get your vegetables too!



\$6.95*

Food & Cost Comparison

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|---|-----------------|---|
| Sweet & Sour Chicken | | Chicken Vegetable Stir-fry <small>cooked at home</small> | | Tip: <i>Add more vegetables to control calories while increasing nutrition!</i> |
| Calories | 620 | Calories | 290 | |
| Total fat | 47 grams | Total fat | 14 grams | |
| Sodium | 830 mg | Sodium | 529 mg | |

Canned pineapples \$0.10

Frozen stir-fry vegetables \$0.50

Chicken breast \$0.99
one 4-ounce piece
(boneless, skinless)

Soy sauce
\$0.13

1 tbsp olive oil \$0.12

Salt
\$0.02

\$1.86[†]



Jelly Doughnut VS Whole Wheat Toast with jelly

To satisfy your sweet tooth with less fat and more fiber, choose two pieces of whole wheat toast and add a tablespoon of your favorite fruit jelly or jam.



\$0.99*

Food & Cost Comparison

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| Jelly Doughnut Small jelly doughnut | Whole Wheat Toast 2 slices of whole-wheat toast with 1 Tbsp of jelly, made at home | Tip: <i>Add peanut butter instead of jelly for extra protein.</i> |
| Calories 289 | Calories 190 | |
| Total fat 16 grams | Total fat 1 gram | |
| Fiber 1 gram | Fiber 4 grams | |

2 slices of whole wheat toast \$0.32

1 tbsp of jelly \$0.10



\$0.42+

Healthy Tip #3

include whole grains

Aim to make at least half your grains whole grains. Look for “100% whole wheat” on the food label. Whole grains provide more nutrients, like fiber, than refined grains.

Healthy Tip #4

don't forget the dairy

Pair your meal with a cup of fat-free or low-fat milk. They provide the same amount of calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk, but less fat and calories. Don't drink milk? Try soy milk as your beverage or include fat-free or low-fat yogurt in your meal.

How to read and understand **FOOD LABELS**

Just what is in what we eat? Food labels can be confusing, but they tell you a lot about what you're eating and how good (or bad) it is for you.

Here are some useful tips for making sense of food labels that will help you choose more nutritious foods.

Pay attention to sizes and amounts when you read food labels. Nutrients are measured per serving, but since there may be more than one serving in a package, you might be surprised to find that you have been eating and drinking more than one serving all along!

Nutrition Facts

1 **Serving Size**

Serving Size 1 cup (228g)
Serving Per Container 6

2 **Calories**
(and Calories from Fat)

Amount Per Serving

Calories Calories from Fat 110

3 **Fat,
Cholesterol
and Sodium**

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 12g 18%

Saturated Fat 3g 15%

Trans Fat 3g

Cholesterol 30mg 10%

Sodium 470mg 20%

Total Carb 31g 10%

Dietary Fiber 0g 0%

4 **Healthy
Nutrients**

Sugars 5g

Protein

Vitamin A 4%

Vitamin C 2%

Calcium 20%

Iron 4%

5 **Percentage
Daily Values**

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

6 **Footnote**

| | Calories | 2,000 | 2,500 |
|--------------------|-----------|---------|---------|
| Total Fat | Less than | 65g | 80g |
| Sat Fat | Less than | 20g | 25g |
| Cholesterol | Less than | 300mg | 300mg |
| Sodium | Less than | 2,400mg | 2,400mg |
| Total Carbohydrate | | 300g | 375g |
| Dietary Fiber | | 25g | 30g |

1. **Serving Size:** The first place to start when you look at the Nutrition Facts label is the serving size and the number of servings in the package. Servings are listed in familiar units, like cups or pieces. Pay attention to serving sizes, and ask yourself how many servings you're actually eating. The calories and other information listed on the label is only for one serving.
2. **Calories (and Calories from Fat):** Calories measure how much energy you get from food. Many people eat more calories than they need, without getting enough nutrients. Eating too many calories is linked to being overweight or obese.
3. **Fat, Cholesterol and Sodium:** These nutrients are listed in red because they should be eaten in limited amounts. Eating too much of these has been linked to serious diseases like heart disease. You should try to keep your intake of these, especially saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol, as low as possible.
4. **Healthy Nutrients:** Nutrients like Dietary Fiber, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Calcium and Iron; listed in yellow; are important for health, and Americans usually do not eat enough of them.
5. **Percentage Daily Values:** The Percentage Daily Values for each nutrient are based on the 2,000 calorie diet. You can use them to tell if a food is high or low in a nutrient like Calcium or Iron.
6. **The Footnote:** This may not appear on smaller food labels, but it is the same on every product. It lists the right amount of food for the standard 2,000 or 2,500 calorie per day diet recommended by many health professionals.

Healthy Tip #5

avoid extra fat

Using heavy gravies or sauces will add fat and calories to otherwise healthy choices. For example, steamed broccoli is great, but avoid topping it with cheese sauce. Try healthier options, like a sprinkling of low-fat parmesan cheese, or a squeeze of lemon.

Healthy Tip #6

take your time

Savor your food. Eat slowly, enjoy the taste and textures, and pay attention to how you feel. Be mindful. Eating very quickly may cause you to eat too much.

CHOOSE HEALTHY

We often choose unhealthy foods because they're quick and easy. But here are some healthy alternatives that are just as easy, along with healthy snack recipes packed with lots of flavor. Something as simple as adding more vegetables to a dish you love can make for a more nutritious meal.

Staying healthy can be a challenge, but it's easier than you think. Remember, every little bit helps, and practice makes perfect.

SNACK ATTACK



A piece of fruit goes a long way. Certain foods are typically low-cost options all year round. For a quick, inexpensive snack, try an orange, an apple or a banana.

Carrot and celery sticks, raw string beans, or pita bread and slices of tomatoes are best when dipped in plain yogurt, fat-free salad dressing, or hummus.





Low-fat yogurt tastes great. For an even better alternative, use plain non-fat yogurt and add some banana slices or strawberries!

Apple slices with a heaping spoonful of plain peanut butter make a tasty snack.





Make a healthier and delicious veggie dip recipe. With a fork, mash avocado and non-fat yogurt in a bowl. Add tomatoes, onions, and lemon juice. This makes approximately 6 servings.



Instead of sugary soda, mix half an 8 ounce glass of 100% juice with half a glass of seltzer - it's just as delicious, and much healthier!



Looking for a crunchy, savory snack? Try unsalted pretzels! They have less sodium and fat than potato chips. But keep it to one portion so you save on carbs.





Instead of pouring ranch dressing on your salad, make your own. Start with 2 ounces of blue cheese, feta or parmesan, and 6 ounces of fat-free yogurt. Add light mayo, vinegar, garlic, lemon juice and black pepper to taste. It's a great dressing with less calories and less fat.

You will get more vitamins and minerals from pizza with vegetables than from plain pizza. But don't be fooled. The amount of calories, fat and sodium will remain about the same.



Instead of 2 slices (or more), eat one slice of pizza with a salad on the side. It's filling and tasty!



Healthy Tip #7

use a smaller plate

Use a smaller plate at meals to help with portion control. That way you can finish your entire plate and feel satisfied without overeating.



Healthy Tip #8

take control of
your food

Eat at home more often so you know exactly what you are eating. If you eat out, check and compare the nutrition information. Choose healthier options such as baked instead of fried.

PORTION CONTROL

When you're eating healthy, **how much** you eat is just as important as **what** you eat. To maintain a healthy diet, it's important to limit the size of your portions. Be aware of serving sizes on food labels. Since portion sizes at restaurants and grocery stores keep getting bigger, save part of your meal to take home when you eat out. Since most foods and drinks have increased in size and calories, when cooking at home, put some of the food away for a later meal. Measure out a healthy serving size of the foods you commonly eat to see how it looks on your favorite plate. Even serving dinner on smaller plates can help with eating less.



Portion sizes have changed a lot over the past 30 years, which has contributed to the growing problem of obesity. Here are some examples of portion size and calories from 30 years ago and today:

| | 30 years ago | Today |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Bagel | 140 calories | 350 calories |
| Cheeseburger | 333 calories | 590 calories |
| Spaghetti & meatballs | 500 calories | 1025 calories |
| Blueberry muffin | 210 calories | 500 calories |
| Coffee | 45 calories | 350 calories |

Healthy Tip #9

try new foods

Keep it interesting by picking out new foods you've never tried before, like mango, lentils, or kale. You may find a new favorite! Trade fun and tasty recipes with friends or find them online.

Healthy Tip #10

drink healthy

Water is the best drink to have when you are thirsty. But if you feel you need a change of taste, try mixing half 100% juice with water or seltzer or keep a flavored tea bag in water, put in the refrigerator for an hour or longer until cold.

Delicious!

DID YOU KNOW?

We may not realize how much sugar is in the food we're eating, even food we think is healthy. Here are some examples of how much sugar could be in your food:

A package of low-fat cookies:

12 grams of sugar (or 3 teaspoons) for 2 cookies. 60 grams (or 15 teaspoons) for 10 cookies.

An iced tea sweetened with sugar:

56 grams (or 14 teaspoons) of sugar for a large 20 ounce container.

An energy drink:

50 grams (or about 12 teaspoons) of sugar.

A snack cake with cream filling and icing on top

42 grams of sugar (or about 11 teaspoons). Saturated fat and salt are also issues.

Ready-to-eat cereals:

This is the fourth biggest source of added sugars in Americans diets. Children ages 4-8 years old should have about 12 grams (or 3 teaspoons) a day. That's the amount in 1 cup of many cereals!

A granola bar:

Some can have as many as 21 grams (or about 5 teaspoons) of sugar. Eat a piece of fruit instead!

A small doughnut:

71 grams (or about 18 teaspoons) of sugar.

A big piece of cherry pie:

36 grams (or about 9 teaspoons) of sugar. Fat content is also a big issue here!

**For more information on eating
healthy and nutritious recipes,
call 311 or visit NYC.gov**

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