



# Family Habits: Takeaway Choices

Takeaway meals are a welcome treat that can be enjoyed as part of a healthy active lifestyle. Takeaways are generally higher in fat and calories than home cooked meals, however there are always healthier choices on the menu to help you enjoy your favourite cuisine.

## Chinese



Try to avoid deep fried foods as they will contain a lot of fat, these may be described as 'crispy' or 'battered', popular dishes such as spring rolls, prawn crackers and sesame prawn toasts are all deep fried. Any option listed as 'sticky' or 'sweet' will contain a lot of sugar.

The **healthiest options** are soups for starters, plain boiled or jasmine rice for sides and chicken, prawn or vegetables in a Szechuan or chop suey sauce for mains.

The **least healthy options** are sweet and sour balls, fried rice and barbeque spare ribs.

## Indian

Again try to avoid any foods that are deep fried such as samosas or bhajis. Indian breads can contain a lot of carbohydrates which combined with rice can make you feel bloated and sluggish. Try to avoid any creamy curries and opt for dry spiced meats such as tandoori or tomato based sauces.

The **healthiest options** are chicken, prawn or vegetables in a jalfrezi or madras sauce, plain rice or dahl and chapattis

The **least healthy options** are creamy curries such as kormas or passandas, pilau rice, naan breads, pakoras and poppadoms.



## Fish and chips



You can't avoid fried food with a chippie tea, but you can take steps to make it healthier. Opt for thick cut chips over fries as they absorb less fat, share your chips or get a smaller portion, strip off and discard some of the batter and say no to salt!

The **healthiest options** are fish coated in breadcrumbs, thick cut chips and mushy peas.

The **least healthy options** are large portions of fish or chips, jumbo sausages, cheese and onion patties or pies.

## Italian

Italian food is delicious and a Mediterranean diet has long been associated with better health. Try to choose tomato based sauces over creamy ones and opt for thin over deep bases for you pizzas.



The **healthiest options** are salads with lots of veggies and lean protein, vegetable based soups such as minestrone, pasta in tomato sauce, baked ('al mattone) meats and gelato or sorbet for desert.

The **least healthy** options are fried dishes such as calamari al fritto, al forno pastas (these have a cream based sauce and are topped with oil and breadcrumbs), deep dish meat feast pizzas and creamy deserts such as panna cotta or tiramisu.

## Pizza



Pizza is a quick and easy option, if you can plan ahead have a Pizza night where you get pizza from the supermarket or get the whole family involved and make it yourself! Try to avoid ordering lots of additional sides such as garlic bread or wedges and say no to giant cookies and tubs of sugary ice cream for dessert.

The **healthiest options** are thin based pizzas topped with lots of veggies or lean protein such as chicken and swap out regular cheese for reduced fat where possible.

The **least healthy options** are deep crust pizzas topped with lots of processed meat such as bacon or pepperoni, avoid stuffed crust pizzas and adding extra cheese.

## Burger chain restaurants

Burger chains are a cheap and accessible option for families. They have a bad reputation but there are healthier choices available. Top tips are to avoid adding extras such as onion rings, extra cheese or cheese bites and resist the urge to go large!



The **healthiest options** on the menu are plain hamburgers, grilled chicken salads, and a regular portion of chicken nuggets. Side salads, carrot sticks and fruit bags are good options for getting some extra colour and nutrients.

The **least healthy options** are double burgers, those with extra cheese, bacon or onion rings included. Milkshakes, large portions of fries and donuts are also a less nutritious choice.

## Chicken chain restaurants



Fried chicken usually has its skin still on and is deep fried making it a less healthy choice when eating out.

If you're getting a bucket meal, share out the chicken and fries and try to opt for some healthier sides such as corn or beans.

The **healthiest options** are popcorn chicken, a veggie ricebox or a chicken salad.

The **least healthy options** are large buckets of chicken advertised for one person, milkshakes, and large stacked chicken burgers.

Resources:

Healthier Takeaways - <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/healthier-takeaways/#:~:text=Try%20to%20avoid%3A%20large%20deep,%2Dbased%20pasta%20sauces%2C%20bruschetta>.