

Funnel Cakes, Fried Cookie Dough Balls and More, Oh My!

June, July and August are great months to head to the ballpark, a county fair, or amusement park. This can bring back memories of your childhood, i.e. eating cheese chili dogs and ice cream sundaes at your hometown community days. Alright, fast forward, you are an adult now and feel a bit guilty with an LDL cholesterol of 200 to eat these same unforgettable foods. No worries, this newsletter will explore food options and better choices that will take away the shame, so you can enjoy tasty indulgences again!



Source: ww.burgerim.com

Sandwiches, Pizza

It may feel daunting asking for a single burger with less than 6 ounces of meat, no cheese or bacon. Now, look at the photo above. Okay, the picture may be enlarged so the 3-ounce hamburger looks like more, but see how you can build your burger with lettuce, tomato and onion? This sandwich has approximately, 427 calories, 10 grams of saturated fat. In comparison, if you ordered a Super Burger, with ½ pound (8 ounces) of meat, 2 ounces of cheese, and 4 slices of bacon, you would be eating 1136 calories and 40 grams of saturated fat!

So, what is saturated fat? It is a fat that is solid at room temperature found chiefly from animal food products as well as in palm and coconut oils. It raises your LDL cholesterol in your blood, lies down the fatty deposits in your blood vessels and impacts your heart health. Sorry for mixing some science with your food, but you must know! Before we move on to pizza, here are a few more tips. If you can order a child-size burger, some may call it a junior burger, go for it! It may just be enough bites to satisfy your craving for the All-American sandwich.

Also, there are some vegetable-based burgers that will reduce the amount of saturated fat you are eating, plus it tastes good too! Now for pizza. Let's start with the size you are ordering at the concession stand. You can save 200 calories by choosing a slice of cheese pizza, even with green peppers and onions than by ordering a pan pizza with the same toppings. Just think, less pizza means you won't feel full and can have something else to eat and drink with it.



Source: www.seriousseats.com

Drinks

Hmmm, it is a hot, steamy day at the ball park. Probably thinking about having a cold beer...but wait, before we talk calories, there is something every responsible adult of drinking age should know. Since there is not enough space here to tell you about this, please go to www.cdc.gov/alcohol/faqs.htm for more on alcohol intake.

Now about that beer, can you talk yourself into drinking a light beer instead of a regular beer?

If so, there is 50 calories less in a light beer, 12 ounce can than in a regular beer, same size container.

Better yet you can switch to a non-alcoholic beverage. Whether you are at an amusement park or sporting event, try unsweetened iced tea, sparkling water, or another non-sugary drink. Skip the infused waters! These drinks have added sugars, vitamins, and food dyes. Instead, get your vitamins from food and fruit/vegetable juices. Try adding a slice of lemon, lime or orange to your water...and of course, there is plain, cold water to drink for hydration, which is no calories, too!



Source: istockphoto.com

Dessert

Does the heat have you beat? If you want to cool off with ice cream, try a traditional scoop of cherry vanilla, strawberry, or plain vanilla with fruit toppings. Another option is to look for ice cream stands that also offer low-fat frozen yogurt. You will be surprised how close in flavor it can be to regular ice cream. Just think by adding a dairy delight, you will add protein and calcium to your diet.

Often you will be at an outside event and pass by cotton candy and funnel cakes stands. The main ingredients contain sugar and/or fat, of course. So, what should you do with this desire to splurge?

You can always share a funnel cake with one or more friends to help reduce your portion size. Some parks may offer other deliciously sweet alternatives like fresh fruit smoothies, which have vitamin C, potassium and can be made low in fat. Depending what are the ingredients in your smoothie, it can be your meal, drink and dessert all at the same time!

Snacks

Let's not forget about caramel popcorn with peanuts and fried cookie dough. Most stands sell regular popcorn, that is, with butter and salt which can have just as much fat and calories as the caramel popcorn. But, you can ask if they are making a fresh batch so that you can get plain popcorn or less butter/salt added, before they make their original additions. Worth a try!

As for the fried cookie dough, well maybe you can find a real oatmeal cookie at the park. Cookie dough tossed in a batter and cooked in oil is a disaster to your normal diet. If you are craving peanuts, buy peanuts in the shell, 8 ounces by weight and share with a friend. Peanuts in this size of a bag would have 1006 calories.

Soft pretzels without cheese and icing is another snack option. Unsalted would be a plus, as well. Again, depending on the size of the pretzel, you may need to share with a friend or maybe a stranger at this point of your eating adventure...just joking.

Bottom Line

Surely nobody goes to a summer event, such as a street fair for healthy food, but hopefully this newsletter gave you some ideas about the choices that are available. If you are unable to find the healthier options mentioned, remember portion size, go small...at least you will not be eating huge amounts of added sugars and fat. Just as a side note, calories and fat are not our only concerns when selecting our foods to eat. We will save our discussion on sodium (found in salt) and other nutrients that we need for our health for another newsletter!

Happy Summer Eating!

Need a Dietitian?

Registered Dietitians are here to help you with your nutrition questions. To make an appointment call 412.692.4497 (Oakland location) or 412.623.2421 (Shadyside location).