Hepatitis C, Cirrhosis, and Drive-thru Fast Food with Low Sodium

September 22, 2014 By Karen Hoyt

It's time to get smart about eating out! My life has been a blur of travel lately and there are times that I have to rely on drive-thru fast food. We have all heard the downside and nasty things said about fast food. But, sometimes the reality is that we are just going to be stuck in a situation where we are...driving through! If you are on a blood pressure medication or a diuretic, you know that sodium is the first thing you count.

The daily sodium recommendation is 2,000 mg. Most fast food sandwiches have over a thousand! BUT, you do not have to eliminate fast food entirely. Just be smart and realize that this is not your only meal of the day, so save some sodium for later! I just passed the cardiac stress test with my low sodium diet. Woohoo and you can too!

It is fairly easy when you eat at home to be super duper good. You have probably read my blog about sit down restaurants. Fast food is in a category all its own. Here are some general guidelines with tips that are so practical that I bet you already know them:

- Leave off the cheese. It adds about 250 mg of sodium per serving.
- Hold the condiments or get them on the side. Use sodium-laden sauces sparingly! Mayo has 1/3 less sodium than mustard.
- Hold the pickles. They're cured in salt so that's a no-brainer.
- Just say, "No salt" on fries and hamburgers.

The Take Away: Remember this if you are in a big hurry - When ordering at most drive-thru places, it is usually safe to get a kids meal minus salt, cheese, and condiments. This adds up to about 700 mg of sodium, which is about 1/3 of the USDA daily requirement. Opting for the salad is an easy way to win and is totally guilt free!

Let's face it though, a kid's meal may not satisfy your appetite. Besides, if you don't have a kid in tow, the server gives you the weird look. They probably imagine you with a room full of kid's meal toys. I just fess up and tell them that I am saving all the toys and plan on selling them on eBay someday and using the money to fund a trip to Europe. Or, a liver transplant. If you ever jump in my car, you will probably find toys under the seat, in the seat and hanging off the rear

view mirror. Yes, I have been known to buy the toy without the meal. My students and grandkids love them!

Now that you know how to order at your favorite fast food drive-thru with low sodium in mind, you may not feel quite so guilty about eating out. I want you to be prepared to see your water retention, ascites, and/or blood pressure go way, way down as well!

Happy Trails and Happy Meals to You, xo Karen:)

Click on IHelpC.com to read this entire blog entry, including Karen's menu of favorite drive-thru fast food with low sodium.

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