

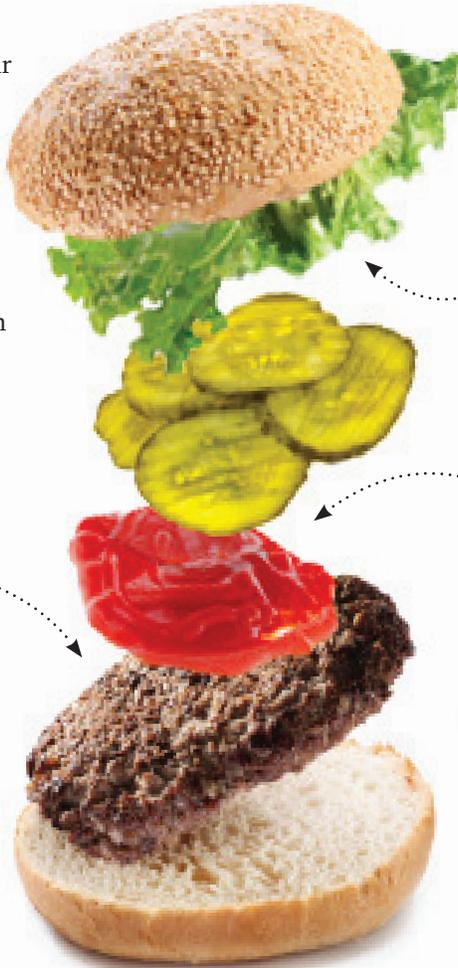
# SWAP THIS FOR THAT!

Nearly 70% of working Americans buy their lunch instead of brown-bagging it. Problem is, 96% of entrees at popular chain restaurants exceed the USDA's limits for calories, sodium, and saturated fat, reports the journal *Public Health Nutrition*.<sup>1</sup> Making simple ingredient swaps can have a tremendous impact on the quality of your meal without sacrificing taste. Here, dietitian Megan Madden, RD, shows how to easily improve your midday eats.

**Swap out ground beef for skinless chicken breast** for big-time savings on calories and saturated fat. A 3-oz



portion of regular ground beef holds about 260 calories and 8 grams of saturated fat, while skinless chicken breast offers about one-third the calories and is much leaner: less than 1 gram of saturated fat per 3 ounces. Decreasing your saturated fat intake can help lower levels of artery-clogging LDL cholesterol.



**Lunch #1**  
Beef burger with lettuce, pickles and ketchup on a bun



**Substitute washed raw spinach for lettuce.** Spinach is a good source of folate, vitamin A, and vitamin K. Folate helps your body synthesize new cells, and the antioxidant vitamin A protects the health of your eyes and skin. Vitamin K plays a key role in blood-clotting and bone mineralization.



For extra flavor, but much less sugar and sodium, **opt for fresh salsa instead of ketchup.** A single tablespoon of ketchup hides 170 milligrams of sodium, while homemade salsa offers minimal sodium. These types of simple substitutions are good for you, since excessive sodium consumption can increase blood pressure and raise the risk of heart disease and stroke.

**Lunch #2**  
Tossed salad with iceberg lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, craisins, mozzarella cheese, bottled dressing

**SWAP OUT** Iceberg lettuce  
**SWAP IN** Romaine

Romaine lettuce is packed with potassium, folate, vitamin A, and vitamin C, which makes it a much more nutritious choice than iceberg, but still offers the crunch you love.



**SWAP OUT** Craisins  
**SWAP IN** Grapes

Instead of craisins, **toss in pear slices, mandarin orange, grapes, or beets for the same hint of sweetness, but fewer calories.** As water is removed during the drying process, a fruit's natural sugars are concentrated and an appropriate portion size shrinks by about 75%. For example, 1 cup of fresh grapes is equivalent to only a quarter cup of raisins. Opting for fresh fruit will be a more satisfying, lower-calorie treat.



**SWAP OUT** Bottled salad dressing  
**SWAP IN** Olive oil & lemon juice

We tend to think of salads as low-calorie healthy lunch options. But it really depends on the toppings you choose. Bacon bits, creamy dressing, and other additions can really drive up the tally of things that are not good for you. In addition, bottled salad dressings often deliver several hundred milligrams of sodium in just two tablespoons. **Pair olive oil with white balsamic vinegar or lemon juice instead.** Olive oil is rich in heart-healthy monounsaturated fat and darker "extra virgin" varieties contain the highest levels of antioxidants.



PHOTOS: (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) BOB INGELHART/ISTOCKPHOTO; VARIOUS/ISTOCKPHOTO; IVAN KMIT/ISTOCKPHOTO; DEBBI SMIRNOFF/ISTOCKPHOTO; LESLIE BANKS/ISTOCKPHOTO; VIKTAR MALYSHCHYTS/ISTOCKPHOTO; ALEXANDER BRYLIAEV/ISTOCKPHOTO; DANNY SWYTHE/ISTOCKPHOTO

<sup>1</sup> Public Health Nutrition. May 2012. <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=8576283>