



From the Food Bank Kitchen

The Food Bank
of Western Massachusetts

Convenience Store Grab & Go Ideas

In an ideal world, every meal you have would be eaten at home and would include a variety of wholesome ingredients. For most of us, however, the ideal world and the real world are miles apart. So, we do what we can with what we have; which can mean some meals or snacks from a convenience store. At one time, that meal meant either a stale donut or that lone hotdog looking as if it had been sitting there for a lifetime. These days you can still find hot dogs and donuts, but you can also pick up fruit, hardboiled eggs, microwavable soup bowls, packages of crackers with cheese or peanut butter, Greek yogurt, bean burritos, and much more. CVS stores and many others now accept EBT cards for food purchases. CONSIDER THESE TIPS TO HELP YOU SELECT HEALTHIER CHOICES:

Try to include as many food groups as possible: Many “quick-pick up” stores offer fresh fruit, fruit cups, as well as salads and cut up veggies. These options can provide much needed fiber and nutrients often missing from other convenience foods, such as donuts and chips. They also provide fewer calories, fat, sodium and less added sugar.

Drink with caution: Convenience stores are famous for their frozen and mega-size drinks. The 50 ounce “Double Gulp” soda from 7-Eleven® is loaded with a whopping 106 grams of sugar (26 teaspoons) and 400 calories. Fortunately, their coolers are also filled with an array of calorie-free waters, flavored seltzers, diet sodas, sugar free iced teas and fruit drinks, and 16 oz containers of skim or 1% milk, which at roughly 160 calories, is a huge calorie saving.

Think small: Instead of grabbing a slice of pizza or a hotdog, consider combining a variety of small items. For example, an individual serving of hardboiled eggs, yogurt, nuts, a banana or carrot sticks with hummus can make great mini-meals.

Beware of “super-sizing”: Beware of the temptation to order more food or drink than you really want or need, just because it seems like a bargain. For instance, upsizing the 7-Eleven’s Gulp® to a Double Gulp® costs 42% more (an extra 37 cents), but provides 300% more calories. Switching from a 3-ounce Minibon® cinnamon bun to a Cinnabon® Classic costs 24% more, but delivers 123% more calories and three-quarters of a day’s worth of artery-clogging saturated fat.

Adapted from: *Environmental Nutrition*, Sept 2011 and www.sparkpeople.com Oct 2011

Meal Ideas

Breakfast at 7-Eleven®:	Snack at Cumberland Farms	Lunch at 7-Eleven®
2 Pack of hard boiled eggs (\$1.29) OR Cheese stick (\$.35 each) Fresh fruit cup (\$1.99) Coffee with milk and 1-2 sugars (\$1.99)	Low fat or fat free Greek yogurt, fruit flavor (\$1.39) Del Monte single-portion pack fruit cup (\$1.79) Bottled water (\$.99)	1 Buffalo chicken Taquito (\$1.39) Garden side salad (\$2.99) Chewy granola bar (\$.50) Flavored Seltzer water (\$.99) OR Unsweetened iced tea (\$.99)

WHAT TO LOOK FOR ON A FOOD LABEL

An easy way to check if a food item is healthy is to check the label. Here are a few quick tips:

Servings per container: Check the **servings per container**, found at the top of the food label, to see how many servings a beverage or package contains. If the ‘Servings per Container’ are more than one, multiply all the other values on the label by the number given. The value you calculated will tell you how many servings the package actually contains.

Let the percent daily value guide you:

The percent daily value tells you how much of a nutrient one **serving** of a food contains based on a 2,000 calorie a day diet. A daily value of 5% or less is considered low, while 20% or more is high. Look for the lowest possible percentages of fat, saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium, limiting how often you buy items with 20% or more of these. However for vitamins, protein, calcium, iron, and dietary fiber, choose foods with the highest percentages. Try to avoid any *trans* fat.

Added Sugar: Aim for no more than 25-38 grams of added sugars a day. Note: 4 grams of sugar is equal to 1 teaspoon. Common names for added sugars include high-fructose corn syrup, dextrose, honey and evaporated cane juice.

Sources: www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/toolkit/Worksheets/foodlabel.htm
www.sparkpeople.com/resource/nutrition.asp

See next page for a Nutrition and Cost comparison of many convenience store items.

CONVENIENCE STORE NUTRITION COMPARISON

Food Item, Serving Size (* indicates a healthier option)	Calories	Fat (gm)	Carbs (gm)	Sugar (gm)	Protein (gm)	Sodium (mg)	Fiber (gm)	Price (\$)
Hot Foods								
Big Bite® Hot Dog, without Bun (7-Eleven®)	480	45	3	2	15	1510	0	1.39
*Buffalo Chicken Taquito (7-11)	180	8	22	1	6	470	1	1.39
Campbell's® Chunky Classic Chicken Noodle microwavable bowl, 15.25 oz (Nutrition info is for full container)	220	6	28	4	14	1580	4	3.69
Sandwiches								
Chicken Tender Sandwich (7-11)	350	8	45	4	22	550	1	4.99
*Smart Turkey and Tomato on Cracked Wheat Bread (7-11)	290	2	47	7	13	830	3	4.99
Tuna Salad Sandwich (Cumberland Farms)	347	17	36	6	16	642	5	3.79
<p>Note: The sandwich selected as a healthier choice is still high in sodium and carbs, but is lower in calories and fat, making it a better option. Look for Healthy Choice® soups & other reduced sodium brands to cut sodium.</p>								
Baked Goods								
Frosted Cheese Danish (7-11)	470	20	68	39	5	440	1	1.49
Old- Fashioned Glazed Donut (Cumberland Farms)	240	12	33	20	2	140	1	.89
*Chocolate Chip Cookie 1 oz (7-11)	130	7	17	11	1	92	1	1.49
Drinks								
XL Berry Freeze Blitz Slurpee® (7-11)	352	0	93.5	94	0	278	0	1.69
8 oz French Vanilla Cappuccino (Cumberland Farms)	140	4	25	18	1	160	0	.99
*8 oz Unsweetened Iced Tea (Cumberland Farms)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.99
Snacks								
*Two Packaged Hard Boiled Eggs (7-11)	140	10	2	0	12	110	0	1.29
*Yoplait Regular Blueberry Yogurt (Cumberland Farms)	170	1.5	33	26	5	85	—	.99
*Del Monte Red Grapefruit Cup (Cumberland Farms)	100	0	23	19	1	20	2	1.79
*Chobani 6 ounce Greek yogurt, fruit flavor (various locations)	140	0	20	20	14	65	0	1.39