

Kids' Meals: Work in Fruits and Veggies

Restaurant Kids' Meals Nutrition Comparison

As with all *EN* comparisons, this is only a sampling of what's available. Products are listed alphabetically.

✓ = **EN's Picks.** Entrée picks contain no more than 300 calories, 12 g fat, and 540 mg sodium. Sides picks contain no more than 100 calories, 3 g fat, and 100 mg sodium.

Restaurant Meals (per order)	Calories	Fat (g)	Sat Fat (g)	Carbs (g)	Fiber (g)	Sodium (mg)	Pro (g)
ENTREES							
Applebee's Kids Cheese Pizza	550	31	13	44	3	1280	21
Applebee's Kids Corn Dog	260	14	4	28	<1	440	6
Applebee's Kids Grilled Chicken Sandwich	230	5	1.5	23	<1	560	24
Applebee's Kids Mini Hamburger (1)	390	27	7	23	<1	490	15
Bob Evans Kids Macaroni & Cheese	301	9	3	45	2	571	11
✓ Bob Evans Kids Spaghetti with Marinara	283	7	1	47	3	535	9
Bob Evans Kids Spaghetti with Meat Sauce	446	21	6	47	3	983	18
✓ Burger King Kid's Meal 4 Piece Chicken Tenders	190	11	2	10	n/a	310	10
Burger King Kid's Meal Double Hamburger	360	18	8	27	n/a	520	22
Chili's Pepper Pals Cheese Quesadilla	380	22	13	29	1	740	18
Chili's Pepper Pals Grilled Cheese Sandwich	530	42	12	30	1	1020	11
✓ Chili's Pepper Pals Grilled Chicken Platter	160	4	1	2	0	170	30
Longhorn Steak House Cheeseburger	510	29	12.5	31	n/a	870	31
Longhorn Steak House Chicken Tenders	340	18	3.5	15	n/a	450	29
✓ Longhorn Steak House Grilled Chicken Tenders	140	2	0	0	n/a	150	30
✓ McDonald's 4 piece Chicken McNuggets	190	12	2	12	1	360	9
McDonald's Cheeseburger	310	12	6	35	2	840	15
McDonald's Hamburger	260	9	3.5	33	2	600	12
Ruby Tuesday Kid Chicken Breast	316	14	n/a	19	4	774	29
Ruby Tuesday Kid Chop Steak	498	36	n/a	18	4	519	25
Ruby Tuesday Kid Macaroni & Cheese	680	37	n/a	61	3	1565	27
Taco Bell Bean Burrito	370	10	3.5	56	10	980	13
✓ Taco Bell Cheese Roll Up	190	9	5	18	2	450	9
✓ Taco Bell Soft Taco, Beef	210	9	4	21	3	530	10
Olive Garden Cheese Pizza	420	10	4.5	64	3	830	17
✓ Olive Garden Cheese Ravioli	290	8	3.5	43	3	470	12
Olive Garden Macaroni & Cheese	340	6	2.5	58	3	1000	13
✓ Wendy's 4 pc Kid's Meal Chicken Nuggets	180	11	2.5	11	1	370	8
✓ Wendy's Kid's Meal Hamburger	250	10	4	25	1	540	15
SIDES							
✓ Applebee's Kids Applesauce Side	50	0	0	4	3	25	3
Bob Evans Kids Green Beans	32	1	0	5	2	416	2
Bob Evans Kids Smileyface Potatoes	271	16	3	29	2	334	3
✓ Burger King Fresh Apple Fries	70	0.5	0	16	n/a	40	0
Burger King Small Fries	340	17	3.4	44	n/a	530	4
Chili's Pepper Pals Side Salad with Low Fat Ranch	130	8	2	14	1	460	4
✓ Chili's Pepper Pals Side Steamed Broccoli	30	0	0	6	3	30	3
✓ Longhorn Steak House Fresh Fruit, Oranges	20	0	0	4	n/a	0	0
Longhorn Steak House Seasoned Fries	290	13	2.5	38	n/a	370	4
✓ McDonald's Apple Dippers (without sauce)	35	0	0	8	0	0	0
McDonald's Kid's Fries	100	5	0.5	13	1	70	1
Ruby Tuesday Side of White Cheddar Mashed Potatoes	112	7	n/a	11	1	215	2
Ruby Tuesday Sugar Snap Peas	113	6	n/a	8	3	164	3
Taco Bell Pintos 'n Cheese	170	6	3	20	8	580	9
Wendy's Value Natural-Cut Fries	230	11	2.5	30	3	250	3
✓ Wendy's Apple Slices	40	0	0	9	2	0	0

Note: g=gram, mg=milligram, sat fat=saturated fat, carb=carbohydrates, n/a=information not available, DV=Daily Value, daily requirement based on 2,000 calorie/day diet. Source: restaurant website. Information reflects items as served; entrees do not include sides or drinks.

If you have little ones in your family, or at least ever eat out with them, you're familiar with the coloring book menu most sit-down restaurants offer, or the fun bags and boxes fast food eateries provide. You also may have noticed that in many restaurants the kids' options are limited to fried chicken fingers, hot dogs, burgers, and mac & cheese. Not that there is anything wrong with those items once in awhile, but the best scenario is kids' meals that recognize their palates are expanding beyond those basic four. Fortunately, quite a few restaurants have become more creative in meal offerings for their youngest patrons.

At your service. Of course, with variety comes more options, which can make decision-making difficult. Not only are there entrees to choose, but in many cases side dishes and drinks, too. Figuring out which menu items are the healthiest isn't always obvious from the name or description. That's where *EN* comes in. Just to help you out, we've scanned menus from an array of both casual dining and fast food restaurants. Here you'll find all the details you need to make the next meal out with your kids and grandkids a bit easier (and healthier.)

Helpful hints. Next time you find yourself ordering off the kids' menu, keep these tips in mind.

- **Balanced is best.** Most children's menus have no shortage of fried foods—chicken, fries, onion rings, and more. If your mini-me won't be satisfied without a little something fried, limit it to one item. Instead of fried chicken fingers and French fries, how about just the chicken with some steamed veggies, or vice versa—the fries with grilled chicken.

- **Cheers!** When it comes to beverages, soda or sugary punches are always available. But to save on calories and sugar, choose low-fat milk or water to wash down that meal.

- **P is for produce.** One of the pitfalls when eating meals out of the house is that it can be difficult to meet your fruit and veggie needs. However, most restaurants have come a long way when it comes to offering fruits and veggies as an option with their kids' meals. Show your appreciation by choosing at least one serving of produce with your child's meal. [E](#)

—Heidi McIndoo, M.S., R.D.