

NEWS ARTICLE

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PLANNING FAIR FOOD IN YOUR DIET

What could be better than a night at the county fair, checking out the exhibits, watching a livestock show, enjoying one of the famous hamburgers from the kitchen, peach cobbler or ice cream? Can it get any better? Fair season is upon us. The Howard County Fair starts Monday, September 6, through Saturday, September 11, followed by other fairs around the area, and ending with the state fair in October.

At each fair, food is as much a part of the fair as the exhibits, rides and livestock shows. But all the fair food we enjoy this time of the year can add extra calories. But hey, fairs involve a lot walking, so we'll probably burn off those extra fair food calories, right? Maybe – if we walk up to 1.5 miles for a bag of cotton candy and 3 miles for a funnel cake.

Big portions with lots of sugar and fat calories characterize many of the foods we traditionally associate with fair. For many of us, attending the fair wouldn't be nearly as much fun without these treats. Some may be once-a-year foods for us, and we look forward to those foods at the fair.

So, can you enjoy these foods and still not gain weight? It depends on what you eat and how much you eat.

On average, you have to walk about 1 mile to burn 100 calories. Most walking trails around the county are laid out for you to easily get a mile in. At Dogwood Pavilion trail, at the city park, two times around the trail equals one mile. Or, if you prefer to go by time, at a 3 mph pace, it'll take you 20 minutes to go a mile. Walking at 4 mph, it'll take 15 minutes to go a mile.

Here is a list of favorite fair foods and the distance needed to walk to burn off the calories.

- Caramel apple – 3 miles
- Corn dog, large – 4.5 miles
- Cotton candy – 1.5 miles
- Fried candy bar on a stick – 4.5 miles
- Funnel cake, 6-inch diameter – 3 miles
- Soft drink, 32 oz. – 2.5 miles
- Sno-cone – 2.5 miles
- Soft pretzel – 3 miles

Wow! Before you stuff your picnic basket with carrots and celery sticks and head to the fair, consider this: With a little planning, it's possible to fit in many favorite fair foods in an overall healthy diet.

- Start by ordering the small drink instead of the larger size. Better yet, buy water to drink at zero calories and spend your fair-day calories on something else.
- Split fair foods among several people. For example, share a large funnel cake with friends.
- Limit yourself to your favorite fair foods. Choose reasonable serving sizes of lower sugar and lower fat items. They are possible. Instead of the double meat, double cheese burger; order the single meat, single cheese version.
- Plan times to eat, rather than grazing your way from one end of the fair to the other. Mindless eating is eating without paying attention. Before you know it, that whole bag of chips is gone!

- Wear comfortable shoes. You are more likely to walk further if your shoes are comfortable. Consider tracking your steps to see how far you walk. There are free apps available or wear a pedometer. One mile equals about 2,000 steps.

Finally, if you do overindulge, try to eat healthier the next day. Going overboard one day will not necessarily ruin your diet. It's when we go overboard several days in a row. So go ahead and enjoy some of your favorite foods at the fair, just don't over do it!

Need some help getting started with a walking plan? Consider forming a team and joining the Fall Walk Across Arkansas starting September 13 and going through November 7.

Registration opens August 30 – September 12, 2021. This eight-week program encourages participants to get out and exercise! To join, you just need to form a team of 2 to 10 people, register your team and members online at walk.uada.edu and start walking. Form your team and get registered today!

Throughout the 8 weeks, members will log the time they exercise each day. This can be done by the team captain or members on a weekly basis. While walking is the preferred method of exercise, many other types of exercise can be counted, including housework, gardening, etc. The goal is to get up and get moving!

Members will receive encouragement throughout the program through online newsletters, which is full of tips and tricks to keep you on track plus nutrition information. And the best thing is it is free to join!

If you would like more information on healthy eating, Walk Across Arkansas, or other exercise programs offered through the University Division of Agriculture, contact the Howard County Extension Office at 870-845-7517 or visit our office located on the second floor of the courthouse.

Be sure to check out the exhibits at the Howard County Fair. Lots of planning has been done to provide a safe, fun, and educational fair this week. Support your community by attending!

Recipe of the Week

Apples are a favorite fair food. Here is a recipe that makes a great snack and is perfect for Fall. Make these one the weekend and enjoy them as an afternoon snack throughout the week. The apples are sandwiched between two cinnamon crumb layers for a delicious treat.

Apple Cinnamon Bars

4 medium apples

1 cup flour

¼ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon baking soda

½ teaspoon cinnamon

1 cup brown sugar

1 cup oats

1 cup shortening

Wash hands. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Stir together the flour, salt, baking soda, cinnamon, brown sugar, and oats in a mixing bowl. Cut in the shortening until mixture makes coarse crumbs.

Lightly grease the bottom and sides of 9 x 13-inch baking pan. Spread half the crumb mixture in the baking dish.

Prepare apples by washing, coring, and slicing them thin. Lay the apple slices on top of the crumb mixture. Top the apples with the rest of the crumb mixture. Bake in the oven for 40-45 minutes. Cut into squares. Yield: 24 bars.

Nutrition information per bar: 99 calories, 5g fat, 53mg sodium, 14g carbohydrates, 1g fiber, 1g protein