

Eating Health When Dining Out

Sticking to healthy eating habits when dining out does not need to be an intimidating task. Just because you are eating out doesn't mean you have to put your good habits on hold. There are several things you can do to make sure you continue eating healthy while enjoying a meal at your favorite restaurant.

General rules for dining out

No matter where you decide to dine, there are some rules you can follow to keep your experience healthy.

- Plan and go to the restaurants where you know you can order healthy, low-fat options.
- Drink water, fat-free or low-fat milk, unsweetened tea, or other beverages without added sugar.
- To eat smaller portions, ask for half of your meal to be boxed up before being brought out, share an entrée with a friend, or order an appetizer as your entrée.
- Ask for all sauces and dressings to be on the side of your meal.
- Ask for foods to be made without the use of butter or oils when possible.
- If you eat dessert, share with a friend.
- Avoid buffets and all-you-can-eat restaurants.

Ordering from the menu

Understanding the wording on a menu can help you decide what and how to order. Follow the guidelines below to become an expert at navigating and understanding the language on menus.

- Avoid items that are described as crispy, deep or pan fried, breaded or battered/dipped, buttery, flaky or creamy. Instead, choose items that are grilled, broiled, baked or steamed.
- Choose leaner proteins, such as chicken and fish.
- Avoid processed, refined flours and sugars, opt for whole grains.
- Avoid creamy sauces; opt for wine or thinned stock-based sauces.
- Replace butter with low-fat sour cream. When possible, ask that butter not be added to your food.

Other useful tips

There are other useful tips to eating out that will help you avoid overeating or eating unhealthy food.

- Eat a piece of fruit or drink a glass of water with lemon before your meal to curb your hunger and help you eat less at the restaurant.
- Avoid adding salt to your meal.
- To help you eat more slowly, cut each bite before you eat it, one at a time, and not all at the same time.
- Put your eating utensils down while chewing each bite.

Visit the American Heart Association at www.heart.org for more ideas on eating healthy while dining out.

Visit www.texercise.com