

Healthy Eating: Making Better Choices When You Eat Out



Fast foods and restaurant foods often contain lots of fat and salt. In moderation, these foods can be part of a healthy diet.

But restaurants today often include low-fat and other healthy items on their menus.

Tips for eating out

- Restaurant servings are often bigger than you need. Order a child's portion. Or take half of your meal home.
- Have a veggie pizza with a whole wheat crust or at least a thin crust. Top it with grilled chicken instead of sausage or pepperoni. Go easy on the cheese.
- Have pasta with roasted vegetables, grilled chicken, or marinara sauce instead of cream sauce.
- Have a vegetable or grilled chicken wrap.
- Try broiled, grilled, baked, or poached food instead of fried or breaded items.
- Order vegetable soup instead of a creamy soup.
- Choose a variety of vegetables from a salad bar.
- Cut back on butter or margarine on bread. Better yet, dip bread in olive oil instead. Ask the waiter to give you one slice of bread with your meal instead of bringing a bread basket to your table.
- Order sauces, gravies, and salad dressings on the side so you can control how much you use. Do not use a lot of these, because they tend to be high in fat and sodium.
- Share appetizers, desserts, and even main dishes with someone.
- Ask for salsa with a baked potato instead of sour cream, butter, cheese, or bacon.
- Choose water or other beverages that do not have caffeine or calories.
- Drink alcohol in moderation, or avoid it.
- Do not "super size" your order.
- Choose whole-grain breads and cereals, whole wheat pasta, brown rice, beans, and lentils. They will help you increase your fiber intake.

- Ask for flexibility. Restaurants will often work with you to change portion sizes and modify menu choices. For example, you may be able to have vegetables or a baked potato instead of french fries or chips. Or you can ask for meals without butter or added salt.

If you need help choosing healthier foods in restaurants, or if you need to be very careful about what you eat, talk to your doctor. He or she may refer you to a registered dietitian, an expert in healthy eating.