

## Features

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### How to eat out

How many times have you sat in a restaurant wondering what on this extensive menu could possibly be healthy or included in your diet? What is lower in carbohydrates or fat? What is the best source of nutrients, and what about calories? How do you eat right when you're eating out and not compromise weight control, health and energy for peak performance?

Many people are eating out without the knowledge of how to order items that are consistent with their diet and health requirements. And, even when they think they are ordering healthier, they can be getting way more fat, calories and carbohydrates than they may think. In the confusion over what to eat and what not to eat, we often shrug our shoulders when we're out, and just splurge.

When you go out to eat, first decide what your priorities will be for that meal. If you're going for the fajitas, consider skipping the sour cream and beans. If you're there for the cheesecake, order a light dinner such as a shrimp cocktail and salad with low-fat dressing on the side.

#### ***Looking for a restaurant:***

- Choose your restaurant carefully. Select a restaurant that incorporates healthy choices into its menu and that has servers who can help modify a meal to your needs.
- Look for restaurants that offer salads, baked potatoes, vegetables, whole-grain breads and other healthy foods.
- Try to know what you want before you go. If you can get a copy of the menu, plan ahead of time what you'll eat.
- Have a snack before eating out so you aren't ravenous when you get there.

#### ***The bread basket: One of the big problems when people eat out is the bread that is served to keep you busy until your food comes.***

- Limit yourself to one slice or a roll the size of your fist.
- When possible, choose whole-grain, plain varieties over cheese or fancy breads.
- Ask for alternatives to the bread such as vegetable sticks and low-fat dip.
- Ask that the bread be brought to the table with your appetizer or meal rather than at the beginning - if it is the only thing on the table, you will eat it.

#### ***Appetizers:***

- If you order an appetizer, don't order fried foods with creamy sauces.
- A good choice is bruschetta, vegetables, fresh fruits and other unbaked choices.
- If your appetizer has bread, remember to skip the bread basket.

#### ***To start your meal:***

- Begin with a tossed green salad topped with low-fat dressing or a broth-based soup, such as vegetable soup, onion soup (without the cheese) or minestrone, or a fruit cup. This will fill you up with lower-calorie foods so you aren't as hungry when your meal arrives.

**Alcohol:**

- Alcohol increases the appetite, adds calories and lowers your inhibitions, which may cause you to pay less attention to your food choices.
- If you must drink, do so in moderation and select beverages that contain the most water, such as light beer, to add the lowest number of calories.

**The entrée:**

- Most portions at restaurants are usually double or triple what a person would normally eat. Ask if you can order a "half size" to avoid the temptation to overeat. If you can't, a good rule of thumb is to leave at least one-third to one-half the meal on your plate.
- Don't be afraid to special-order. Small requests can result in a dish that has half the calories of the original.
- Ask for the meat to be baked, broiled, grilled or stir-fried.
- Have sauces and dressings on the side.
- Order more vegetables instead of high-fat sides like french fries.
- Share a meal and add a salad or soup to fill you up.
- Ask for a doggie bag before you eat so you don't finish the whole meal.

I think eating out occasionally can be one of life's great pleasures. The most important thing to remember is to think of it as part of your overall healthy eating plan.

Everything in moderation is a wise guideline to follow when considering the menu at your favorite restaurant. As for me, if the restaurant has tiramisu, fried ice cream or anything chocolate for dessert, that becomes my target for the evening. I skip the bread altogether, have a healthy salad with low-fat dressing, order a healthy entrée with vegetables and then thoroughly enjoy my dessert! I plan ahead so I can enjoy myself with the occasional decadent dessert, and then just let the kid in me have fun. Staying healthy isn't about denying yourself or feeling deprived - it's about planning and making choices.