



Eating out the healthy way

LOW CALORIE AND HEART HEALTHY TIPS

Studies show that if you have successfully lost weight, you are more likely to keep it off if you limit how often you eat out.

Eating out in restaurants is enjoyable and most everyone does it from time to time. However, we live in a fast-paced world where most Americans eat out an average of 4 times per week. The more you eat out, the more you need to watch what you eat. It is possible to eat healthy in a restaurant.

The biggest challenge is to look at the menu and order food that tastes good but is also lower in fat and calories.

Why is restaurant eating so difficult?

Most restaurants specialize in tempting you to buy and eat more. Food and beverages are displayed and marketed so you will spend more money. Food choices are typically high in fat and calories, served in huge portions.

What can I do to avoid pitfalls?

Plan ahead. Use the internet or nutrition pamphlets to find out which restaurants offer the healthiest choices. Have a snack or eat early to avoid excessive hunger that might lead to overeating.

What about restaurant portions?

Americans have become victims of “portion distortion”—huge portions seem normal to us. Studies show that the more food you receive on your plate, the more likely you are to overeat. A super-sized fast food meal can be 2–3 times the fat and calories of a similar regular-sized meal.

Tips for eating out

Keep portions small

- Stick to your usual at-home portions.
- Ask for a take-out container, or share an entrée.
- Share desserts, often just a bite is enough.
- Smaller senior meals, or appetizer portions are usually about the right size.

Eat less fat and calories

- Choose meals marked “heart healthy” or “light.”
- Eat less added fats like mayonnaise, butter, salad dressing, and sauce—order on the side and use a small amount.
- Ask for food served without cheese.
- Make special requests—most restaurants will gladly prepare to order.
- Choose broiled, grilled or roasted food, and lean meats.

Choose low or no calorie beverages

- Order diet soda, unsweetened tea, sparkling water, or lower fat milk.
- In coffeehouses, order non-fat “skinny” drinks in smallest portions.
- Use alcohol in moderation, if at all. (1 drink per day for women, 2 per day for men).

Other things you can do...

- Ask that non-ordered foods such as chips or bread be removed from the table.
- Choose more whole grains, fruits, and vegetables.
- Always order a salad or vegetable to help fill you up.
- Choose lower fat dairy products.

The Place...	The Healthy Choices...
Coffeehouses	Choose: Non-fat or low fat milk “skinny” coffee drinks. Avoid: Added syrups, chocolate, and whipped topping. Tip: Ask for a smaller size.
Fast Food	Choose: Small sandwiches or smallest burger with mustard, grilled chicken sandwich, turkey sandwich with lettuce, tomato, and veggies, salad with light dressing. Avoid: Cheese, “special sauces,” mayo, and regular salad dressing. Tip: Avoid super-sizing. Share a small french fry.
Steakhouse/ American	Choose: Broth-based soups. Barbeque or grilled chicken breast, sirloin steak, filet mignon. Baked beans. Avoid: High fat meats such as ribs, and fried or saucy side dishes. Tip: Fill up on steamed vegetables, and salad. Order toppings, sauces, and salad dressing on the side.
Mexican	Choose: Side of beans (not refried) with tortilla or rice. Chicken or vegetable fajitas, and soft chicken tacos. Avoid: Fried foods, smothered dishes with cheese. Tip: Ask for sour cream, green chili, and guacamole on the side, use only a small amount. Use salsa instead.
Chinese	Choose: Stir fried vegetables, szechuan shrimp or chicken with steamed rice. Broth soups. Avoid: Fried dishes such as sweet & sour pork, or eggrolls. Tip: Ask for low-sodium soy sauce. Have food steamed, not fried.
Buffets/ Salad Bars	Choose: Fill your plate with salad with light dressing, and vegetables first. Avoid: Fried foods, or those with heavy sauces, mayonnaise, or gravy. “Goosey” desserts. Tip: Walk down the buffet line to plan your strategy before making choices. Have fresh fruit for dessert.
Italian	Choose: Pasta with marinara, or clam sauce, grilled fish, seafood, shrimp or veal. Veggie pizza with thin crust. Avoid: Large portions. Tip: Position the bread basket out of arms reach, limit yourself to one small piece.
Breakfast	Choose: Hot or cold cereal with non-fat or low fat milk, yogurt with a plate of fresh fruit. Scrambled egg with veggies, and canadian bacon or lean ham. Avoid: High fat breakfast items such as bacon, or sausage. Baked goods. Tip: Ask for egg substitute and sugar-free maple syrup.
Seafood	Choose: Broiled or grilled fish, scallops or shrimp. Avoid: Tarter sauce, and breaded/fried items. Tip: Eat more fish with Omega-3 fat such as salmon, catfish (not fried), or trout. Order with extra lemon, not tartar sauce.

Menu makeover

Instead of ...	Order ...
Basket of chips with guacamole	Take a small handful of chips with salsa
Smothered beef burrito with cheese, sour cream, and green chili	Chicken burrito—(no cheese) with green chili and guacamole on the side
Side of rice and refried beans	Side of whole black beans
Soft drink	Diet soft drink, water, or unsweetened tea.

For more information

- Check your *Kaiser Permanente Healthwise Handbook*
- Visit members.kp.org
- **Registered dietitians**—Medical Nutrition Therapy for chronic disease. Cholesterol and Diabetes Classes. Call **303-338-4545** to schedule.

Other resources

- *Restaurant Confidential* Michael Jacobson & Jayne Hurley
- *Guide to Healthy Restaurant Eating* Hope Warshaw

For nutrient information try

- calorieking.com

The information presented here is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of information or medical care you receive from your doctor. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult your doctor.