

Tips for Eating Out

During the hot summer months the last thing we want to do some days is heat up the house by cooking dinner, so eating out can be very appealing. But it is important that we make healthy food choices when we eat away from home to ensure our health and weight don't suffer. Fortunately, making healthful and delicious choices in restaurants is easier today. Restaurants of all types are responding to customers' desires with more options in portion sizes, preparation methods and menu items. Most restaurants offer:



- More appetizer-size portions of popular entrées
- More baked and broiled choices in meat, fish and poultry
- More fruit and vegetables side orders to substitute for fries

But here are a few things you can do to make eating out a healthy experience.

Hit the Bricks

Make physical activity part of dining out. All you need is a comfortable pair of shoes:

- **Walk from Home or the Office.** Pick a restaurant that's a 10- or 15-minute walk away. You'll get your meal and 30 minutes of physical activity and avoid the parking hassles.
- **Walk with Family or Friends.** Get moving as a group before or after eating. A brisk walk before a meal gives you time to chat. A stroll afterward helps your digestion.
- **Walk Up Instead of Driving Thru.** Park your car in the farthest corner of the lot and walk inside to get your fast food order. And make fast food an occasional treat rather than a daily habit.

Right-Size Your Serving Sizes

Becoming sensible about serving sizes is an important way to maintain a healthy weight and it's good for your wallet too.

- Instead of a large entrée, order an appetizer and a leafy green salad or choose two appetizers for a meal.
- Start with a small serving of a cup of soup or salad and then add a junior burger or a small order of fries. If you are still hungry, order something else.
- Indulge your inner child: Order a kid's meal at a fast-food restaurant. Many now offer a choice of low-fat milk and fruits or vegetables instead of fries.
- Savor your steak twice as much. Eat half at the restaurant, and then take the other half home to enjoy sliced onto a green salad or as a sandwich on whole-grain bread.
- Ask for a to-go box as soon as your meal is served. Put half your food into the container for a second meal. That's two meals for the price of one.
- Share from start to finish. Order one appetizer for the whole table and then order one dessert with multiple forks. Sometimes, just a bite or two is perfect.
- Share an entrée. You can ask your server to split the meal in the kitchen or divide it up yourselves at the table.

You can enjoy your restaurant meal without abandoning healthy eating. All it takes is a little planning.

Source: eatright.org – Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics