

Dining out can be healthy



Stumped at how to order healthy food in restaurants? Most people can control their food choices at home, but lose their nerve or let their defenses down when they eat out with friends or family.

The truth is, if you want or need to manage your fat and calorie intake, dining out can be a real obstacle toward reaching your goals. Huge portions, heavy sauces and tempting desserts are just a few of the problems.

Here are some tips to help you make better choices.

Speak up

- ▶ Order salad dressings and other sauces on the side. You will avoid a great deal of extra fat and calories. Just add a small amount as needed.
- ▶ When you order grilled fish or vegetables, ask that the food be grilled without butter or oil.
- ▶ Ask for special low-calorie or low-fat preparation of a menu item. More and more restaurants are offering these options.

Decode the menu

- ▶ Tomato-based pasta sauces (e.g., marinara, tomato and basil) are much lower in fat than cream-based sauces (e.g., alfredo and vodka).
- ▶ The same rule applies to soups. Order tomato- or broth-based soups. They are much lower in calories than those made with cream.
- ▶ Generally, items that are baked, grilled, broiled, poached or steamed will have less fat and fewer calories.
- ▶ Menu items that contain the words fried, creamed, au gratin, parmesan, escalloped or marinated (in oil) are typically much higher in fat and calories.

Watch portions

- ▶ **Share a dessert with a friend or two.** Usually a little taste is all you need.
- ▶ **Share an appetizer.** You don't need to fill up before the main course.
- ▶ **Love your leftovers.** Save them for tomorrow's lunch or dinner.
- ▶ **Try having an appetizer and a salad as your main meal.** This is often enough food for one sitting.

Be smart

- ▶ **Fill up on broth-based soup, not bread.** Soup can serve as a great appetizer to a meal, or paired with a salad as an entrée. It is filling and low in calories.
- ▶ **Pay attention to your body's signals,** and stop eating when you are full.
- ▶ **If available, choose whole-grain foods,** such as whole-wheat bread, brown rice or oatmeal.
- ▶ **Allow yourself the occasional treat,** especially if you don't eat out very often.

Substitute

- ▶ **Order steamed vegetables or a baked potato** to replace fries or mashed potatoes.
- ▶ **Ask for salsa with a baked potato** instead of sour cream, butter, cheese or bacon. It adds a lot of flavor for a fraction of the calories.
- ▶ **Order sandwiches with mustard** rather than mayonnaise. Mustard adds flavor but has no fat and very few calories.
- ▶ **Drink water, diet soda or unsweetened tea or coffee** instead of regular soda or drinks with alcohol.
- ▶ **Choose berries or other fresh fruit or sorbet for dessert** instead of high-fat cakes or ice cream.

