

WEEK EIGHT

Let's Eat Out: Smart Choices

Let's Eat Out: Smart Choices

Americans are "eating out" more than ever before. Healthy choices can be made even if someone else is doing the cooking! The following tips will help you control your intake of calories, fat, cholesterol, sodium, and sugar while dining out.

1. Select a restaurant that caters to the health-conscious consumer with a "light" entree section on the menu. Avoid all-you-can-eat buffet-style restaurants because it's too easy to overeat.
2. Plan ahead. However, don't skip meals or you'll be so hungry that you may not be able to make wise selections. Be the first in your party to order so you won't be tempted by the selections of others. Share an entree or dessert with a friend.
3. If you are unfamiliar with a particular dish, ask about the ingredients and preparation method.
4. Use the menu creatively. For example, you may find appropriate choices for an entree in the appetizer section where portion sizes are generally small.
5. If you cannot find a suitable selection, make a special request. Most restaurants want your business and will accommodate your needs, especially those that pride themselves on preparing food from scratch. For instance, fresh fish broiled with lemon juice instead of butter. Restaurants that you patronize frequently are usually more willing to honor special requests. Telephone ahead of time to inquire.
6. At fast food restaurants, select the smallest plain hamburger. Skip the special sauces and mayonnaise and ask for extra lettuce, tomato, and onion instead. When possible, choose the salad bar (go easy on the dressing) or a baked potato topped with ketchup, raw vegetables, or a sprinkle of Parmesan cheese.
7. Ethnic restaurants are very popular. Many oriental dishes are naturally low in fat. However, the sodium content can be quite high. Request that MSG (monosodium glutamate) not be used and do not add any extra soy sauce.
8. Use salsa atop Mexican dishes instead of sour cream or shredded cheese.
9. Italian foods, such as pizza, are lower in calories, fat, cholesterol, and sodium when sausage, pepperoni, anchovies, and extra cheese toppings are omitted. Vegetables like green peppers and mushrooms are fat-free toppings.
10. **Restaurant nutrition information** for larger "chains" is often available from each individual company. Also, several publications are available that list nutritional contents of restaurant menu items. Check your local pharmacy or bookstore.

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR EATING OUT

BREAKFAST

- Go Ahead* Fruit or juice, plain toast or English muffin, bagel, small muffin, oatmeal or cream of wheat, high-fiber cereals, scrambled or hard cooked eggs.
- Think Twice* Croissants, sweet rolls, coffee cakes, Danish, doughnuts, granola, bacon, sausage, hash brown potatoes, omelets, sugar-coated cereals.

APPETIZERS

- Go Ahead* Fruit juice, melon or fresh fruit cup, vegetable relish tray with low-calorie dressing or salsa as a dip, shrimp cocktail, broth soups.
- Think Twice* Cream soups, broth-based soups, vegetable juices, fried cheese, and fried vegetable sticks.

SALADS

- Go Ahead* Plain, raw vegetables or fruit salads with low-calorie dressing on the side, lemon juice or vinegar.
- Think Twice* Pickled, marinated vegetables, or creamy prepared salads.

SANDWICHES

- Go Ahead* Plain lean meat (roast beef, ham), poultry, fish, or cheese. Use lettuce and tomato slices to add moisture instead of mayonnaise or butter. Choose natural cheeses (cheddar, provolone, or Swiss) instead of processed cheeses (American) to reduce sodium.
- Think Twice* Hot dogs, luncheon meats (bologna, salami), fried fish, fried chicken, grilled cheese, prepared poultry, fish or egg salad.

ENTREES

- Go Ahead* Meat, poultry, fish and seafood that is roasted, grilled, baked, broiled, or poached without added fat. (Trim off excess fat and skin and eat small portions.) Meat served "au jus" or with natural juice. Pasta with tomato, marinara, or clam sauce.
- Think Twice* Fried, sautéed, breaded items. Gravy, rich sauces, cheese toppings, pasta with rich meat or cream sauce.

VEGETABLES/POTATOES

- Go Ahead* Steamed, boiled, or stewed vegetables without added fat. Stir-fried vegetables are usually low in fat. Baked, steamed, mashed, roasted, or oven-browned potatoes without added fat.
- Think Twice* Fried, creamed, scalloped, au gratin, sautéed items, candied or glazed items.

DESSERTS

Go Ahead Fresh or juice-packed fruit, gourmet coffee, angel food cake, regular jello, sponge cake, ice-milk, low-fat yogurt, low-fat frozen yogurt, and sorbets.

Think Twice Cake, pie, cookies, pastry, ice cream, custard, pudding.

BEVERAGES

Go Ahead Coffee, tea, low-fat or skim milk, mineral water, club soda, seltzer water, sugar-free soda, unsweetened fruit juices.

Think Twice Alcoholic beverages, milkshakes, regular soda, cocoa.

CONDIMENTS

Go Ahead Lemon juice, vinegar, diet salad dressing, pepper, herbs, tabasco sauce, salsa, Parmesan cheese, mustard, ketchup, horseradish, low-fat or non-fat sour cream.

Think Twice Butter, mayonnaise, salad dressing, sour cream, coffee creamer, salt, seasoned salt, soy or teriyaki sauce, pickles, sugar, honey, syrups, jam, jelly.

Allegheny County Health Department, Nutrition Services

Based on Allegheny County Board of Commissioners (Tom Foerster, Chairman; Pete Flaherty; Larry W. Dunn) and Allegheny County Health Department (Bruce W. Dixon, M.D., Director).

Rev. 3/02