

# Eat Well at Restaurants

Often when we eat at home, we can control what and how much we eat. All of that changes when faced with a restaurant meal. There are lots of challenges involved with trying to make healthy choices when dining out. Here are just a few:

- Large portions
- Limited healthy choices
- Not knowing ingredients or how food was made
- Tempting food
- Wanting to be polite
- Wanting to get your money's worth
- Drinking alcohol

**Paying attention to the type of restaurant you go to can also help.**

Find restaurants in your area that have some tasty and healthy options. Suggest one of them when planning meals out!

You are more likely to find healthy choices at:

- Places with a salad bar
- Sit-down restaurants
- Vegetarian restaurants

You are less likely to find healthy choices at:

- All-you-can-eat buffets
- Burger restaurants
- Most fast-food restaurants
- Pizza restaurants



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As well as paying attention to how your food is prepared, consider your menu choices. Remember how to build a healthy plate!

## On menus, look for the words:

- Baked
- Broiled
- Grilled
- Healthy
- Light
- Low-fat or fat-free
- Steamed
- Whole grain or whole wheat

## To find out if an item is healthy, ask:

- How is this made?
- What ingredients are in this?
- What kind of oil is this cooked in?

## To make a healthy swap, ask:

- Can I have this baked/steamed/broiled/grilled instead of fried?
- Can I have extra veggies on my sandwich instead of cheese?
- Can I have the dressing/sauce/gravy/sour cream/butter on the side?
- Can I have a baked potato instead of fries?
- Can I have a salad instead of coleslaw?
- Can this be cooked in vegetable oil instead of lard/butter?
- Can I have some fruit instead of dessert?
- Can the fat be trimmed from the meat before it's cooked?
- Can the skin be removed from the chicken before it's cooked?
- Can I have skim milk with my coffee instead of half-and-half?
- Can I have water with lemon instead of soda?
- Can I get a side order of steamed vegetables instead of fries?

## To make sure you get a healthy amount, ask:

- Can I get the smallest size of this item?
- Can I have an appetizer instead of a main course? (Bonus: add a side of veg)
- Can my friend and I share this item?
- Can I get a to-go box when you bring my meal? (Then you can box up half of it before you start eating!) You can always take leftovers home with you for another meal.



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Type of Restaurant	Choose More Often	Choose Less Often	Special Requests
<b>Fast Food/ Fast Casual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grilled chicken sandwich</li> <li>• Lean roast beef sandwich</li> <li>• Single hamburger</li> <li>• Turkey sandwich</li> <li>• Salad</li> <li>• Chili, bean and broth soups</li> <li>• Low-calorie drinks, such as unsweetened iced tea or water</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fried or crispy sandwiches</li> <li>• “Super-sized” burgers with high-fat toppings (cheese, mayonnaise, bacon)</li> <li>• Fries</li> <li>• Chips</li> <li>• Cream soups</li> <li>• Soft drinks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salad dressing on the side</li> <li>• Grilled, not fried</li> <li>• Extra vegetables on sandwich</li> <li>• Fruit on the side</li> </ul>
<b>Mexican</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soft tacos, burritos</li> <li>• Chicken, vegetable, or shrimp fajitas</li> <li>• Beans</li> <li>• Salsa</li> <li>• Low-calorie drinks, such as unsweetened iced tea or water</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deep-fried items such as flautas, chimichangas, chalupas, taquitos</li> <li>• Chips and dip</li> <li>• Nachos</li> <li>• Sour cream, cheese</li> <li>• Margaritas, sangrias</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salsa or guacamole instead of cheese or sour cream</li> <li>• Brown rice, whole grain tortillas when available</li> </ul>
<b>Italian</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grilled entrées, such as chicken, fish or sirloin steak</li> <li>• Pasta with tomato-based sauces, such as marinara</li> <li>• Vegetable pizza (easy on the cheese)</li> <li>• Minestrone soup</li> <li>• Salad</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cream-based sauces, such as Alfredo</li> <li>• Cheese-based entrées such as ravioli or lasagna</li> <li>• Pepperoni or sausage pizza</li> <li>• Fried eggplant or chicken parmesan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole-grain pasta when available</li> <li>• Less cheese on pizza</li> <li>• Olive oil instead of butter</li> <li>• Extra vegetables</li> </ul>
<b>Asian (Thai, Chinese, Japanese)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broth-based soup</li> <li>• Chicken or beef teriyaki</li> <li>• Steamed or stir-fried vegetables, chicken, beef, shrimp, or tofu</li> <li>• Edamame</li> <li>• Sushi</li> <li>• Steamed/baked fish</li> <li>• Steamed appetizers, such as fresh spring rolls, steamed dumplings</li> <li>• Steamed rice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deep-fried dishes, such as orange chicken, tempura, wontons, crab rangoon and egg rolls</li> <li>• Fried crispy noodles and fried rice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra vegetables</li> <li>• Cook in less oil</li> <li>• Steamed instead of fried</li> <li>• Brown rice instead of white when available</li> </ul>