



**DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION**

University of Arkansas System

Living Well with Diabetes

Dining Out with Diabetes

Eating out has become increasingly popular for Americans over the past 30 years. Half of America's food dollar is spent on food away from home. A number of factors contribute to the trend of increased dining out including a growing number of women employed outside the home, more two-earner households, higher incomes and smaller household size.

While eating out is a special treat for many of us and a way of life for others, one thing is for certain: it is difficult to limit calories, fat, sodium and sugars when eating out. Controlling carbohydrate intake can also be a challenge. With some planning and initiative, eating out can be both healthy and enjoyable. Following are some suggestions for eating healthfully when eating away from home.

Select Your Restaurant Carefully

Find a restaurant that offers an extensive menu. Survey the selections. Many restaurants have special listings for healthy eating. Read menus carefully for terms that indicate healthier selections. Speak up. When eating out, remember you're in charge so don't be afraid to ask for what you want.

If you expect the meal to be delayed beyond your regular eating time, have a snack before leaving home – fruit or milk would be a good choice. Keep a small can of juice in your purse or car in case there is an unexpected delay. Ask that soup, salad or an appetizer be brought right away.

Know your meal plan and food lists so you can select foods at a glance. Measure foods at home so you are familiar with serving sizes, especially for carbohydrate foods. Watch your serving sizes. If portions are large, eat only the amount you are allowed and share the rest with a friend or take it home. Learn how to switch among carbohydrate foods so you have more choice and better glucose control.

Steer Clear of Extra Fat and Sodium

Learn keywords to help you select foods that are lower in fat, calories and sodium. Fat and sodium make food taste good so restaurants use them liberally. Become a restaurant sleuth and learn which cooking methods use more of these flavorings.

Higher sodium menu words:

| | |
|----------------|--------------|
| Barbecued | Pickled |
| Cocktail sauce | Smoked |
| Creole | Soy sauce |
| Marinated | Teriyaki |
| Mustard | Tomato sauce |
| Parmesan | |

Higher fat menu words:

| | |
|---------------|----------------------|
| Au gratin | Deep or French Fried |
| Alfredo | Prime |
| Batter-dipped | Rich |
| Breaded | Sautéed |
| Creamed | Smothered |
| Crispy | Stuffed |

Lower fat menu words:

Baked Braised Broiled Poached Roasted Steamed Stir-fied

Appetizers

Go easy on rich sauces, dips and batter-fried foods. If you want soup, order a cup rather than a bowl. Broth or tomato-based soups are lower in fat than creamed soups. For added fiber, choose soups made with vegetables, but know that potatoes, corn, lentils, beans or split peas contain carbohydrates and need to be counted as part of your total carbohydrates.

Breads

Avoid filling up on bread while waiting for your meal. Choose whole grain breads most of the time – they have more fiber. Croissants, biscuits, cornbread and hush puppies are much higher in fat than most other breads. Sweet rolls and sticky buns are higher in sugar and fat than loaf bread, bagels or English muffins. Many crackers are high in fat and sodium, so enjoy just a few and limit spreads and dips. Reducing the amount of spreads, margarine and butter you use on breads and crackers will help reduce the fat in a restaurant meal.

| Breads | Calories per Piece or Slice |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| Croissant | 235 |
| Cornbread | 190 |
| Pita | 165 |
| Hard white roll | 155 |
| Biscuit, small | 127 |
| Bread sticks | 105 |

| Breads | Calories per Piece or Slice |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| French bread | 100 |
| Popover | 95 |
| Whole wheat roll | 90 |
| Rye roll | 90 |
| Dinner roll | 85 |
| Italian bread | 80 |

Salads

Tossed green salads are healthy choices - it's what we add to the salad that can be a problem. Salad dressings are often high in fat, calories and sodium. Ask that dressing be served on the side, then use it sparingly or ask for reduced calorie salad dressing. Many salad toppers such as bacon bits, chopped egg, grated cheese, seeds and croutons add extra calories, fat and sodium.

Salad bars can be your nutritional "best friend" but not all salad bar items are equal in caloric and nutritional value. If you are not careful, a salad from a salad bar can provide more calories and fat than a sandwich, glass of milk and a piece of fruit.

Follow these tips to decrease calorie intake at salad bars:

- Load up on low calorie, high fiber salad ingredients such as lettuce and spinach.
- Choose plain, un-marinated items such as carrots, celery, green peppers, radishes, mushrooms, onions, cucumbers, broccoli, cauliflower, tomatoes and other non-starchy vegetables.
- Limit quantity of salad dressings. They may range from 60 to 90 calories per tablespoon.
- Use thinner dressings, select low-calorie versions, low fat cottage cheese, or use vinegar or a wedge of lemon. Or, eat salad "undressed."
- Limit use of crunchy toppings — such as sunflower seeds, croutons and bacon bits - they are high in fat and calories.
- Go easy on prepared salads that contain mayonnaise, salad dressing or oil, such a macaroni salad, potato salad, creamy coleslaw and marinated vegetables. They are high in fat and may add carbohydrates to your meal.
- Select fresh fruits such as strawberries or melon over canned peaches or fruit cocktail. This saves calories and carbohydrates from sugar syrups.

| Salad Bar Item | Calories | Salad Bar Item | Calories |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Lettuce, spinach, 1 cup | 10 | Three bean salad, ½ cup | 100 |
| Un-marinated vegetables, ¼ cup | 10 | Carrot-raisin salad, ½ cup | 110 |
| Cottage cheese, lowfat, 2T | 35 | Cheddar cheese, ¼ cup | 155 |
| Hard cooked eggs, ½ egg | 40 | Low-cal French dressing, ¼ cup | 160 |
| Bacon bits, 1T | 40 | Potato salad, ½ cup | 180 |
| Sunflower seeds, 1T | 55 | Pasta salad, ½ cup | 200 |
| Cottage cheese, full fat, 2T | 55 | Low-cal ranch dressing, ¼ cup | 200 |
| Creamy coleslaw, ½ cup | 60 | French dressing, ¼ cup | 280 |
| Low-cal Italian dressing, ¼ cup | 60 | Blue cheese dressing, ¼ cup | 320 |
| | | Ranch dressing, ¼ cup | 360 |

Side Dishes

Plain vegetables are high in fiber and other nutrients and low in calories, fat and sodium. Look for steamed or roasted vegetables seasoned with lemon, herbs or spices. Avoid foods described as fried, basted, braised, au gratin, creamed, crispy, escalloped, sautéed or stuffed. Most restaurants will serve gravies, cream sauces, sour cream and other toppings "on the side" if you ask. Choose rice, pasta or noodles without cream sauce or added butter and watch the portion size.

Entrées

Chicken or fish tend to be lower in fat and cholesterol than beef, unless fried and/or breaded. Order meat, fish or poultry that is baked, blackened, broiled, grilled, roasted, steamed or poached rather than fried. Broiled or grilled entrees are often basted with fat. Don't be afraid to ask how such items are prepared and ask to have your entree prepared without added fat. Sometimes fried foods are your only choice. If so, have a smaller helping. Remove the skin or breading to cut fat, carbohydrate and calories. This may also decrease sodium.

Desserts

Skip dessert or order a small serving of sherbet, fruit ice or sorbet. Or ask for a fresh fruit cup or fruit plate. Even these lighter desserts will likely contain carbohydrate, so you will need to trade off for some other carbohydrate food. If you decide on a rich dessert such as pie, cake or pastry, try splitting it with friends or take half of it home.

Beverages

Stick to calorie-free or low-calorie beverages such as plain coffee, tea, decaffeinated beverages, diet soft drinks, milk as allowed on your meal plan, or unsweetened fruit juice most of the time. Limit chocolate milk, cocoa, milk drinks such as shakes and malts, regular soft drinks and alcoholic beverages.

Fast Food

Fast food restaurants are everywhere. Their menu items tend to be higher in fat, calories and sodium than other restaurant food. But, even fast food restaurants offer some good food choices. Learn which fast food restaurants serve the healthiest options and choose those most often. Start by carefully looking at the whole menu. Ask for nutrition information if it is not posted. Use the information to make healthier choices. Watch out for value added or super-sized items. They may add more fat and calories than you bargain for.

Remember there is no such thing as a low-fat cheeseburger. Hamburger is always high in fat and so is cheese. If you must order a burger, order a small one and hold the cheese. Beware of topping burgers with special (mayonnaise-based) sauce and bacon – they add fat and calories. Pickles, onions, lettuce, tomato, mustard and catsup add flavor without the fat. Pickles, catsup and mustard add sodium, though.

Steer clear of breaded and fried fish and chicken sandwiches. Order a grilled sandwich instead. Try a side salad or plain baked potato instead of French fries. Ask for fat-free salad dressings and always ask for the dressing "on the side."

Ethnic Cuisine

Ethnic restaurants are popular and offer variety to American cuisine. But, ethnic foods can be high in fat, calories and sodium. Here are some tips for making healthy ethnic choices:

Italian – Italian is the most popular ethnic restaurant food in America. Two thirds of all restaurants serve Italian dishes. Italian foods are high in carbohydrates and use less meat. Olive oil plays an important role in Italian cooking. Olive oil is one of the healthiest oils, but is still fat and adds calories.

Tip – Choose garden salads over Caesar salad. Look for vegetable-based entrees such as primavera. Go easy on the garlic bread and antipasto trays. Choose foods with marinara or red sauce instead of cream-based alfredo or carbonara sauces. Avoid breaded and fried meats.

Pizza can be a nutritious food depending on your choice of crust and toppings. Choose single, thin crusts. The healthiest topping choices are Canadian bacon, grilled chicken or shrimp, peppers, onions, mushroom, broccoli, pineapple, tomato slices, spinach and lean ground beef. Avoid pepperoni, sausage, bacon and anchovies.

Mexican Food – A lot of Mexican food is fried with lard and topped with cheese, so it's loaded with fat. But when you know what to choose, Mexican food can be fresh, tasty and low in fat.

Tip – don't fill up on chips and salsa or cheese dip while waiting for your meal. In fact, tell your server not to bring fried tortilla chips to the table. Hold the sour cream and guacamole from entrees; use salsa to add flavor. Vera cruz or other tomato-based sauces are better than creamy or cheesy sauces. Select soft tacos, enchiladas and burritos instead of crispy tacos, tostadas and chimichangas. Beware of the deluxe combo plates. They usually have more starchy food than you need. If you order a taco salad, don't eat the fried shell.

Chinese Food – Chinese food is one of America's most popular and healthy ethnic cuisines. Just ask the cook to use less oil when preparing stir-fry and other dishes and to leave out soy sauce, MSG and salt. Main dish portions are often quite large, so try

ordering fewer entrees than you have dinner companions and let everyone taste some of each dish.

Tip – Choose entrees with lots of vegetables. Chop suey with steamed rice are good examples. Make sure you only eat a small portion on rice. Substitute chicken for duck, when possible. Skip the crispy fried noodles on the table.

Size Does Matter

No matter where you eat, be mindful of portion sizes. Learn what standard serving sizes are and try to follow them. Use your hands to visualize servings.

- A serving of meat is like the palm of your hand
- A serving of green salad is like an open cupped hand
- A serving of fruit or vegetable is like a closed cupped hand
- A serving of baked potato is like your fist
- A serving of cheese is like your pointer and index fingers together
- A serving of chips or pretzels is like two handfuls
- A serving of salad dressing is like your thumb

Here are some tips to follow so you don't eat too much.

- Don't overeat just because you are eating out.
- Order an appetizer instead of an entrée.
- Ask if smaller portions are available. The menu may list only one serving size, but a small chef salad or half an order of spaghetti may be available for the asking.
- Ask if the restaurant offers smaller portions for children or older adults at reduced prices.
- Ask to have a lunch portion at the dinner meal.
- Share a meal with someone or take some of your meal home.
- If smaller portions aren't available, ask for a "to go" box to be delivered with your meal so you can immediately remove part of the oversized portion from your plate.
- Don't fall into the super-size trap. It may only cost you "just thirty nine cents more", but you could be adding hundreds of calories to your meal.
- Approach buffets with a plan. Don't view a buffet as a personal challenge to get more for your money by overflowing your plate. Instead, survey the entire buffet, decide what you want, and take only that.

Eating more healthfully doesn't mean you have to always eat at home. Enjoy eating away from home. Just get into the habit of making good food choices no matter where you eat.

References

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