

Restaurant Tips

“PLAN FOR HEALTH” using these restaurant tips:

Plan ahead. Decide what you will eat before you get to the restaurant. Choose restaurants you know will have healthy options. Many restaurants have Web sites. Check out menus in advance. Eat a piece of fruit or yogurt before you go to “take the edge off” your hunger.

Learn about portion sizes. You don’t have to clean your plate – ask for part of your meal to be packaged to go or plan to share a meal with someone.

Ask how foods are prepared. Don’t be afraid to ask for foods to be made without cream, butter, cheese, or mayonnaise.

Nourish yourself by selecting healthy options first. Some menus highlight low-calorie, low-fat, and low-sodium foods. If you can’t find them, ask. Explain what you need to the waiter or waitress, or ask to see printed nutrition information.

Forget the bread basket. Ask your server not to bring it to the table or have him or her bring one or two servings only.

Order salad or soup for an appetizer. Leave out extra croutons, cheese, or fried noodle strips.

Request items “on the side.” Ask to have sauces and dressings on the side and use as little as possible.

Have seafood or lean meat, or go with a vegetarian entrée.

Eat slowly and enjoy your meal. Let your body tell you when you’re full.

Ask the restaurant to use low-fat cooking spray, adding little or no extra fats to meals.

Look for choices that are roasted, poached, steamed, baked, or grilled rather than deep-fried, pan-fried, or sautéed in butter.

Try drinking water instead of other high-calorie beverages.

Have fruit for dessert. Enjoy a sweet taste without all the calories.



You can also use these tips if you live at a facility where your meals are provided for you such as in a retirement facility, assisted living, or a group home.

Try these calorie-cutting, healthier menu options:



Appetizers

Make a plan. Limit yourself to a choice of an appetizer, bread, or dessert, not all three.

- Choose minestrone, tomato, or broth-based soups. Avoid cream-based choices such as a bisque, chowder, or cheese soup.
- Try fresh vegetable appetizers; they are a great way to fill up and get additional fiber.
- Avoid salads that contain fried foods. Ask for poultry, meat, or seafood to be grilled.
- Ask for fat-free or low-fat dressing “on the side,” not tossed in the salad. Try different vinegars (balsamic, wine) or lemon juice as your salad dressing.
- Leave off extras like croutons, cheese, egg, nuts, fried noodle strips, etc.



Entrée

- When choosing entrées, including vegetarian choices, avoid cheese, cream, etc.
- Select skinless poultry, preferably white meat, and lean cuts of beef and pork such as tenderloin, London broil, or filet mignon. Avoid ribs, prime rib, and other marbled meats.
- Ask for an appetizer-size portion of an entrée or consider ordering one or more low-calorie appetizers and a salad, or bowl of soup in place of a large entrée. A mix of healthy side orders can also make a great meal.



Sides

- Skip the creamed vegetables or those that have cheese. Order vegetables steamed and sprinkle on lemon juice, vinegar, herbs, or spice for added flavor.
- Be adventurous. Try something new instead of the old stand-by of French fries.
- Ask that French fries or potato chips be left off your plate so you won't be tempted.
- Choose colorful vegetables, a tossed salad, or fresh fruit over potato salad, coleslaw, or macaroni salad.



Beverages

- Drink plenty of water or low-calorie, sugar-free beverages before and during your meal.
- Try making water more exciting by drinking carbonated water or adding slices of lemon, lime, watermelon, cucumber, or a splash of 100% juice to add flavor with few calories.
 - If water doesn't satisfy you, consider low-fat (1%) or non-fat (skim) milk.



Dessert

- Order fresh fruit or choose a small order of non-fat yogurt, low-fat ice cream, sorbet, sherbet, gelatin, or a piece of angel food cake.
- Share a dessert with friends or family instead of eating a whole dessert yourself.

Bread

- Limit bread to 1-2 slices per meal. Choose baked bread, rolls, and saltine crackers instead of croissants, biscuits, or cornbread.
- Leave off butter or margarine. For toast, ask for it “dry.”

Eat slowly. Take plenty of time to savor the flavor of food. Enjoy yourself!

