

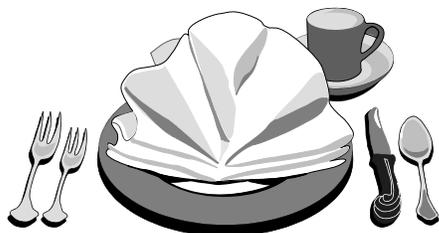
## *Dining Out in a Healthy Way*

The demand for convenience and a change in eating habits have contributed to the popularity of dining out. Busy schedules often force people to eat on the run. Take out, frozen foods, and home-delivered meals are habits characteristic of many Americans. Meals eaten away from home, particularly at fast food restaurants, can potentially contribute excess calories, fat, and sodium while limiting the intake of calcium, dietary fiber, and vitamins A and C. Excess snacking from calorie-laden, low nutrient-dense foods can lead to consuming too much fat and sugar. The two trends of dining out more and an increased interest in health, fitness, and nutrition seem to be incompatible, but with careful planning, healthful eating can be achieved regardless of our busy lives.

### **Overall Nutrition Picture**

Your overall nutrition picture depends on selections of food and serving sizes. To make wise food choices you need some knowledge of food composition and preparation techniques. A balanced diet contains a wide variety of foods.

The Food Guide Pyramid and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans can assist you in food selections and amounts. When dining out, you don't have to eliminate all your favorite foods. Simply choose foods high in calories, fat, sodium, and sugars less often and eat smaller portions. Don't forget to eat three meals a day, as skipping meals makes it easier to overeat during another meal or snack. Thirty minutes of physical activity should also be an important part of your daily routine.



### **Reading Menus**

**Plan ahead.** Cater to restaurants that can accommodate your desired food selections. A greater selection of menu items gives you an opportunity to choose for variety. Terms such as ♥ steamed ♥ in its own juice ♥ garden fresh ♥ broiled ♥ roasted ♥ poached ♥ tomato juice or ♥ dry broiled in lemon juice or wine usually denote low-fat preparation. Menu descriptors such as Ø buttered Ø sautéed Ø fried Ø crispy Ø braised Ø in cream sauce Ø hollandaise Ø au gratin Ø escalloped Ø marinated Ø stewed Ø basted Ø casserole Ø prime Ø hash or Ø pot pie should send warning signals of foods high in saturated fat, cholesterol, and possibly sodium.

If you are trying to cut down on portion sizes, try the following activities: choose appetizers as the main course; orders a la carte; share food; and order dressings and sauces on the side. If your food arrives and has not been fixed as you requested, send it back. If the restaurant has a buffet, walk the buffet line first and then make your choices.

### **Appetizers**

Steamed seafood, raw vegetables, or fresh fruits and melons are a delightful way to start any meal. Avoid salted nuts, buttery crackers, and potato or tortilla chips. If you cannot resist, put one serving on your plate and eat slowly. Choose soups carefully as they may be laden with sodium or fat. Clear soup bouillon or tomato-based soups are a healthier choice than cream soups.

### **Entrees**

When ordering your main course, look for simply prepared foods, such as skinless poultry, fish and shellfish, and vegetable dishes. These foods are naturally low in fat and can be prepared without adding any fat. Lean red meats, such as London broil, filet mignon, and round or flank steaks, when properly trimmed and prepared, are a good choice. Check with your server to see if broiled items are basted with fat; if so, ask that they use a dry broil or can be broiled with lemon juice.

### **Salads**

Salads that contain fresh greens like lettuce and spinach and vegetables such as cucumbers, radishes, tomatoes, carrots, and onions offer great variety in flavor and texture without adding unwanted fat and salt. Be selective when eating off a salad bar; go easy on cheese, eggs, meat, bacon, croutons, and dressing-based salads like Cole slaw or potato salad. Order salad dressings on the side. Lemon juice squeezed over your salad is a zesty, fat-free dressing and a natural flavor enhancer.



### **Breads**

Breads are an important part of a varied diet, supplying starch, fiber, and some vitamins and minerals. Whole-grain breads such as wheat, bran, oat, and rye provide the greatest amount of fiber. Breads and other baked goods differ widely in the fat and sugars they contain—with croissants, biscuits, and hush puppies usually much higher in fats than other breads. Use butter and other spreads sparingly.

### **Side Dishes**

Make sure vegetables or starch side dishes are not fried or doused in butter. Whipped margarine may be available, or try low-fat Italian dressing on your potato or vegetable for more pizzazz. The plainer your choices, the lower in fat and calories they most likely will be.



### **Beverages**

Water is the ultimate thirst quencher! Sparkling water with lemon or lime is a delicious alternative to cocktails or carbonated colas. Choose low-fat milk, lemonade, or apple cider. Drink coffee or tea plain or limit use of sugar and cream.

### **Dessert**

Dessert need not be left out. Fresh fruit, fruit ices, sherbets, plain gelatin, or angel food cake may be a good finishing touch to the perfect meal. If you can't resist that rich dessert, try splitting it with a friend.

### **Breakfast**

Start breakfast with fresh fruit or a small glass of juice. Add whole-grain bread or dry toasted English muffin. Pre-sweetened cereals often have more sugar than you would add to unsweetened cereals. Except for granolas, most cereals (hot or cold) are low in fat. Skim and low fat milk provide the same nutrients but lower calories and less fat than whole milk. Avoid egg-based dishes like quiche and omelets that tend to be high in calories, cholesterol, fat, and sodium. Most breakfast meats are high in fat and sodium but ham and Canadian bacon are leaner than regular bacon and sausage.

### **Chinese**

Choose Oriental dishes that are boiled, steamed, or lightly stir-fried in vegetable oil, rather than sautéed. Enjoy steamed rice instead of fried. Avoid high-sodium soups. Ask for sauces to be served on the side and to eliminate MSG and salt from the recipe. *Hunan* and *Szechwan*-style food is high in calories when the meat is fried in hot oil.

### **Thai**

Most Thai meals consist of many different items, including soup, a steamed dish, a fried dish, a hot salad, and many dips and sauces. Most Thai soups are clear and relatively healthy. Skip the fried dish since the rest of the meal should be plenty to fill you up. Most Thai sauces are vegetable or seafood-based and should be healthy choices. Stir-fried vegetables cooked in light oil are a Thai favorite. Pick steamed rice instead of fried to go with your meal. Fresh fruit is a popular Thai dessert and a great way to complete your dining experience.

### **Italian**

Pasta dishes can be low fat if not ladled with cheese, fat meats, butter, or cream sauces. Marinara and Marsala sauces are usually lower in fat. Scaloppini or parmesan dishes are usually higher in fat. Pasta primavera, made with a small amount of oil and fresh vegetables is a good low fat dish. The appetizer portion of pasta may be large enough to be filling. Simply prepared chicken and fish dishes are your best bet.

### **Mexican**

With added cheese, sour cream, and fried tortillas and beans, Mexican food has many high fat menu items. But whole grains are staples of Mexican dishes and tortillas. When made with corn and baked rather than fried they can be a nice addition to your diet. Shrimp or chicken tostados on a non-fried cornmeal tortilla with rice and beans can be high in fiber and low in fat.

### **Vending Machines**

Vending machines can be a source of empty calories, as well as an added expense. Choices such as pretzels, raisins, dried fruit, fruit juice, trail mix, peanut butter crackers, fig bar cookies, or gingersnaps are much better alternatives to nuts, cookies, chips, candy bars, or soda pop.

Eating for good health doesn't have to be dull. You don't have to give up your favorite foods either. Balance higher calorie, fat, and sodium foods with other menu items that are lower. Or choose lower calorie, fat, and sodium foods at other meals. Adding physical activity to your day can balance out those extra calories. Remember the key is to think about the nutritional value of your food. *Bonn appétit!*

You can change the way you eat when dining out. With a little practice, you will soon be making wise food selections from any menu. And you'll find, with the exception of favorite foods, that you don't miss those calorie-laden, high fat or high sodium foods. Here are some examples of how minor changes in your menu selections can make for major savings in fat and calories.

<b>Fast Food Menu Selections</b>		
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<p><b>57 grams fat and 1190 calories</b>          Bacon Double Cheeseburger          Large Fries          Milkshake</p>	<p><i>versus</i></p>	<p><b>27 grams fat and 676 calories</b>          Regular Cheeseburger          Small Fries          Side Salad with Reduced Fat Dressing          Low fat Milk</p>
<p><b>38 grams fat and 734 calories</b>          Fried Chicken Breast          Mashed Potatoes and Gravy          Cole slaw with mayonnaise base          Biscuit</p>	<p><i>versus</i></p>	<p><b>5 grams fat and 313 calories</b>          Baked Chicken          Corn-on-the-Cob          Cole slaw with vinegar base          Dinner roll</p>

<b>Submarine Sandwich Selections</b>		
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<p><b>32 grams fat and 857 calories</b>          Salami          Cheese          Mayonnaise          Tomato          Pickles          Submarine bun</p>	<p><i>versus</i></p>	<p><b>10 grams fat and 356 calories</b>          Lean Ham          Mustard          Lettuce          Tomato          Hot peppers          Pita pocket</p>
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<b>Salad Bar Selections</b>		
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<p><b>87 grams fat and 905 calories</b>          Lettuce          Tomato          Cheese          Egg          Macaroni salad          Cole slaw          Chicken salad          Sunflower seeds          Croutons          Ranch dressing</p>	<p><i>versus</i></p>	<p><b>6 grams fat and 390 calories</b>          Lettuce/Spinach          Tomato          Carrots          Broccoli          Mushrooms          Garbanzo beans          Green pepper          Fresh fruit salad          Dinner roll          Reduced fat dressing</p>
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 FN-SSB.032; August 1995; revised March 2004.

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