

YOUR GUIDE TO DINING OUT

-how to make healthy menu choices-



It's true you may have less control over how foods are prepared and what ingredients are used when you eat out, *but you can control which foods you choose and how much you eat.*

Where you eat greatly affects the food choices available to you. The following guidelines can help you make healthy menu choices at your favorite restaurants. Do NOT order menu items containing RED light words as these foods are high in fat and/or salt. CHOOSE menu items with GREEN light words as these are healthier choices.

GREEN LIGHT WORDS:

Braised
Poached
Blackened or charbroiled
Barbecued
Grilled
Simmered or stewed
Roasted
Stir-fried
Mesquite-grilled
Plain
Marinated
Vegetarian
Cooked in light wine sauce
Baked, broiled, boiled, or steamed
With herbs & spices

RED LIGHT WORDS:

Deep fried
Topped with melted cheese
Stuffed
Cheese sauce
Heavy cream sauce
Breaded and fried
Deep fried until crispy
Crispy
Dipped in batter & fried
Rolled in breadcrumbs & fried
Golden fried
Lightly fried
Bacon, sausage
Loaded with cheese, bacon
and/or sour cream

WHAT SHOULD I ORDER?

Use the following information to make healthful choices:

- **Fast Food, Sub Shops, & American Restaurants:** Do not order foods containing words such as jumbo, super, double, triple, extra large, whopper, & big.

BEST CHOICES:

Blackened or grilled chicken sandwich
Fajitas, chicken or beef
French dip sandwich
Hamburger or cheeseburger
Oriental stir-fry
Soup & Salad with low-calorie dressing
Veggie burger
Cheese Pizza, topped with vegetables
Turkey or Smoked turkey sandwich

WORST CHOICES:

Baby back ribs
Hot dogs & chili dogs
Bacon cheeseburger
Chicken fried steak
Reuben or Club sandwich
Philadelphia cheese steak
Tuna melt
Pizza with meat toppings
Chicken, Egg, or Tuna Salad

- **Chinese Restaurants:** Chinese food can be healthy if you eat it the way the Chinese do - Choose main dishes that contain vegetables and eat just one cup along with one cup of steamed rice. Go easy on the meats and sauces. Do not order deep fried dishes and those that contain nuts.

BEST CHOICES:

Vegetarian Delight
 Moo Goo Gai Pan
 Velvet or Hunan chicken
 Szechuan Shrimp
 Stir-fried Vegetables
 Shrimp with garlic sauce
 Chicken Chow Mein
 Hunan Tofu
 Egg Drop Soup

WORST CHOICES:

Kung Pao Chicken
 Sweet & Sour Pork
 Orange (Crispy) Beef
 Moo Shu Pork
 General Tso Chicken
 Fried Rice
 Beef with Broccoli
 Lo Mein
 Wonton soup

- **Italian Restaurants:** To save calories and fat, eat just 1/2 of the main dish plus a side dish of spaghetti with tomato or marinara sauce. Take the other half home for another meal and save both calories, fat, and money!

BEST CHOICES:

Spaghetti with tomato sauce
 Linguini with Red Clam sauce
 Spaghetti with Meat sauce
 Spaghetti with Meatballs
 Venetian Grilled Chicken
 Shrimp Marinara
 Minestrone soup
 Plain bread/breadsticks

WORST CHOICES:

Fettucini Alfredo
 Lasagna
 Cheese Manicotti & Ravioli
 Eggplant Parmigiana
 Veal Parmigiana
 Fried Calamari
 Veal Piccata
 Garlic bread/breadsticks

- **Mexican Restaurants:** Many dishes use beans, corn or wheat based breads, lettuce, tomatoes, onions, peppers, salsa and chilies which are all healthy choices. Go light on the cheese, sour cream, guacamole, and chips. Black beans, a side order of Mexican rice, or a side order of soft flour tortillas are much better choices than refried beans.

BEST CHOICES:

Black beans & rice
 Burritos , bean or vegetable
 Enchiladas. bean
 Fajitas
 Soft tacos
 Arroz con pollo (rice with chicken)
 Tostados, bean or chicken
 Chili verde (with vegetables)

WORST CHOICES:

Refried beans
 Chimichangas
 Enchiladas, beef or cheese
 Nachos & Quesadillas
 Mexican pizza
 Taco salad
 Tortillas, fried or served as a shell
 Chilies rellenos

- **Seafood Restaurants:** All seafood, prior to preparation, has health benefits. But, many of the health characteristics of seafood can quickly be lost if it is prepared in a high-fat and high-calorie recipe.

BEST CHOICES:

Crab legs, without butter
Fish, baked or broiled
Lobster, without butter
Manhattan clam chowder
Oysters on the half shell
Shrimp cocktail
Shrimp & scallops, broiled

WORST CHOICES:

Breaded & fried fish or seafood
Dishes with creamy sauces
Fish 'n chips
Seafood pie or bisque
Shrimp or lobster Newburg
New England Clam chowder
Stuffed fish & shrimp

- **Breakfast & Brunch:** To keep the BEST CHOICES healthy, beware of large amounts of butter, whipped butter, cream cheese, and syrup that tend to be served with these dishes! Ask for these on the side.

BEST CHOICES:

Juice & fruit
Cold & hot cereal
Pancakes
One egg
Bagels & Muffins
English muffins & Toast
Egg substitute
Grits
Ham & Canadian bacon
Home fries

WORST CHOICES:

Bacon & Sausage
French toast
Waffles
Two eggs
Eggs Benedict
Omelettes, all types
Steak & eggs
Croissants & Danish pastry
Biscuits & Doughnuts
Hash browns

- **Food Ideas for the Road:** If you travel a lot, you may not have much choice about where you eat out. You probably stop wherever you happen to be when you're ready for a break. Taking a few foods along in the car can help. Bring a cooler for items that need refrigeration.

GOOD CHOICES:

- Small cans or cartons of fruit juice
- All types of fresh fruit
- Raw vegetables, cut up
- Whole wheat crackers & low-fat cheese
- Peanut butter sandwich on whole wheat bread
- Low-fat granola bars
- Small boxes or bags of raisins or dried fruit mix
- Dry cereal
- Snack mix of plain popcorn, dry cereal, bite-size pretzels with seasonings such as paprika, hot pepper sauce, and garlic powder.

LOW-SODIUM TIPS:

- ◆ Avoid dill pickles, green olives, soy sauce, steak sauce, catsup, mustard, and barbecue sauce.
- ◆ Ask that sandwiches/subs be served without pickles or condiments.
- ◆ Request that foods be prepared without sauces or condiments.
- ◆ Choose salad instead of soup for appetizers.
- ◆ Limit salted snack foods, chips, crackers, or nuts.
- ◆ Ask that monosodium glutamate (MSG) not be used in food preparation.
- ◆ Do not order dishes such as fried rice & lo mein that have soy sauce already added.
- ◆ Choose dishes with light sauces and/or sweet sauce, hot mustard sauce, or duck sauce at Chinese restaurants.
- ◆ If you know you are going out for a high sodium Chinese or Japanese meal, eat low sodium foods during the day.

LOW-FAT TIPS:

- ◆ Read food descriptions carefully and make wise menu choices. Ask questions about how the food is prepared and served.
- ◆ Be careful how much and what you eat while waiting for your order!
- ◆ Limit garlic bread & breadsticks while waiting for your food to arrive.
- ◆ Do not order meat or vegetables served in cream sauce, cream based soups, fried or breaded, cured or processed meats, bacon, corned beef, pastrami, sausage, lasagna, pasta with cream sauce, fried eggs or eggs scrambled with cheese or ham.
- ◆ Don't order high fat pizza toppings such as pepperoni, sausage & extra cheese.
- ◆ Order baked, broiled, or roasted chicken or fish and ask that sauces be served on the side.
- ◆ Choose low-fat side dishes such as plain, baked, or boiled potatoes, plain rice or pasta, and plain steamed vegetables.
- ◆ Request that foods be cooked in as little oil or fat as possible.
- ◆ Ask that salad dressing be served in a separate container or on the side.
- ◆ Limit mayonnaise, oil, and salad dressings.
- ◆ Scrape sauces and mayonnaise off sandwiches at fast-food restaurants.
- ◆ At fast food restaurants, choose salads with low-fat salad dressing, plain baked potatoes, whole grain rolls, lowfat milk and fruit juice.
- ◆ Do not add bacon bits, croutons, or olives to salads.
- ◆ Choose low-fat desserts such as fresh or canned fruit, angel food cake, sherbet, sorbet, and fortune cookies.
- ◆ Watch your portion sizes. Split a meal with a friend, or have extra food wrapped up and take it home.
- ◆ Avoid junk foods from convenience stores and vending machines.
- ◆ Watch out for "all you can eat" offers at smorgasbords and buffets.