

# Healthy Tips for Eating Out

## TIP 1: PLAN AHEAD

Watching what you eat at restaurants is nearly impossible without planning. Even if you choose the healthiest thing on the menu, most restaurant entree portions are higher in calories, sodium, and fat than what you would normally eat for dinner. Prepare for this by limiting higher calorie meals throughout the day. It's also important to do your research before eating out. Most well known restaurants have made their nutrition information available to the public. Use that information to determine what you plan to order before stepping foot in the restaurant.

## TIP 3: CONTROL YOUR PORTIONS

The average restaurant plate is 2-3 times more than the recommended serving size. Cut back on the amount of food you eat by ordering off the appetizer or a la carte menu, splitting an entree with a friend, or asking the waiter to package half the entree to go. You can also control your portion sizes by eating slowly. It takes about 20 minutes for your brain to get the message from your stomach that you are no longer hungry. Fast eaters often are over eaters, while slow eaters tend to eat less and are still satisfied.

## TIP 5: READ BETWEEN THE LINES

Not all restaurants can provide nutrition information for their menu items, but you can still make healthier choices through knowing how restaurants describe their food. Avoid foods labeled fried, creamy, breaded, crispy, sauced, buttered, cheesy, and battered as this typically indicates a higher fat and calorie option. Instead, opt for items labeled steamed, broiled, baked, grilled, poached, roasted, or stir-fried. If your not sure how the food was cooked, be sure to ask your waiter before ordering.

## TIP 2: TAKE CHARGE

Don't be afraid to make special requests when it comes to your meal. Take charge and ask for foods to be made without cream, butter, cheese, or added salt. Request items like sauces and salad dressings "on the side." Ask for foods to be baked rather than fried. Ask your waiter to split your entree into two portions. If you don't see something on the menu that fits your diet, ask for it! Most restaurants are willing to work with you to make your dining experience pleasurable.

## TIP 4: SKIP THE SNACKING

Extra calories and fat can add up quickly if you snack before the meal. Minimize temptation by removing the bread basket. Ask your waiter not to bring it to the table or have them bring one or two servings only. Think carefully about the amount of chips you eat. Remember four chips is that same as eating one whole tortilla! If you are really craving chips, portion out 4-6 on a plate or napkin and have the rest of the basket removed. Try asking the waiter if they have any fresh vegetables like carrots or cucumbers you could eat instead.