

Eating Well While Eating Out

Eating out can be a part of a healthful diet. Aim to prepare balanced meals at home most often and keep exercise a part of your routine. When you are eating out, it's easier than you think to make wise choices. Just follow these easy tips:

- **Prepare in advance.** If possible, take a look at the menu ahead of time and find a few balanced choices that you like.
- **Be the first one to order.** You won't be tempted to change your mind when you hear what others order. Be sure to read the menu carefully.
- **Go for balance.** Choose meals that have a balance of:
 - Lean protein like fish, chicken, or beans.
 - Fruits and vegetables. Ask about side fruit and vegetable salads, steamed or roasted vegetable options.
 - Grains. Aim for whole grains like whole wheat bread, whole-wheat pizza crust, and brown rice.
- **Watch portion sizes.** Start with half of your meal and box the rest for home or split one meal between two people.
- **Avoid buffets and supersizing.** The price may seem better, but the quantity is too much. These choices can lead to feeling too full.
- **Drink water or low-fat milk.** Fill up on foods instead of fluids. Limit soda, juice and sweetened beverages. Do not drink energy drinks. As a bonus, choosing water saves money.
- **Ask for substitutions.** Do not be afraid to ask for items to be made differently or to substitute items. For example, ask for grilled chicken instead of fried. Ask for fruit or vegetables instead of French fries.

Restaurant Tips

- Go easy on condiments, special sauces, and dressings and ask for them on the side.
- Ask for your foods to be baked, broiled, or grilled, instead of fried.
- Limit foods described as buttery, fried, crispy, creamed, in gravy, au gratin, or in cheese sauce.
- If ordering French fries, onion rings, or potato chips, share with everyone at the table.
- Have bread and tortilla chips served with the meal instead of before it.
- Skip dessert or split dessert as a family.
- Load your pizza and sandwiches with vegetable toppings.
- For a lighter meal, order a non-fried appetizer or a salad as your meal.
- If you choose the buffet, fill up at least half of your plate with fruits and vegetables first. Take no more than two trips. Use the small plate, which holds less food. Choose one dessert that is your favorite.

Fast Food Tips

Fast food is not off limits. Like other foods, it should be eaten in moderation. Even if you are eating fast food, you do not have to eat it fast! Don't eat in the car, sit at a table at home or in the restaurant. You will likely eat less and enjoy the food more.

Tips to try:

- Water instead of soda, juice, lemonade, or sweet ice tea.
- Apple slices instead of French fries or the smallest order of French fries.
- Grilled chicken instead of fried chicken or fish.
- Single slice of vegetable pizza.
- Get condiments (mayonnaise or dressing) on the side.
- Deli sandwich on whole-grain bread.
- Small hamburger.
- Bean tacos.
- Baked potato.
- Salad with grilled chicken and dressing on the side.

Other helpful teaching sheets

- # 1558 Go, Slow, and Whoa foods
- # 1557 Packing a Healthy Lunch
- # 1556 Healthy Food Shopping

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any concerns or if your child has special health care needs not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.