



Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance professionals at National Insurance Services, Inc.

Many restaurants, especially chains, post their menus on their websites. Visit the site before you go out to dine and select your meal. Then, when it's time to order, you won't be tempted to order a less healthy alternative because you have already decided what you are going to eat.

EATING OUT CAN BE HEALTHY

Though it may seem like an impossible feat, you can still maintain your diet while enjoying a meal out with friends and family.

Furthermore, it can still be an enjoyable experience.

Since restaurants (especially fast food chains) tend to serve meals with more fat, salt and sugar than a meal prepared at home, it is important to understand what foods to avoid and which ones to select from the menu.

Foods to Avoid

There are many foods full of excess fat and calories that can destroy your healthy diet. Steer clear of these foods while dining out:

- Condiments such as salad dressings, cheese sauces, tartar sauce, gravy and guacamole
- Butter and cheese
- Fried foods such as chicken or French fries
- Beverages such as regular soda, whole milk and various alcoholic drinks

Foods to Try

To make healthier decisions while out enjoying a meal, try some of these foods to keep your diet on track and your waistline thin:

- Soups made with juices and broth instead of cream
- Raw vegetables without a marinade
- Fresh fruit
- Steamed seafood
- Poached or boiled eggs

- Salads with low-calorie or fat-free dressing on the side
- Whole-grain breads and crackers
- Baked, boiled and steamed potatoes without sour cream, butter or cheese on top
- Roasted, baked, broiled and grilled meats and poultry
- Diet soda, low-fat or non-fat milk, or water
- Yogurt
- Whole wheat tortillas

General Suggestions

In addition to opting for healthier foods, there are many other things you can do as a restaurant patron to make your dining experience less fattening. First, order your food to go. Research suggests that Americans eat less at home on their own plates than they do in a restaurant. Plus, you can prepare a healthy side dish to accompany the meal you purchased from the restaurant.

Also, avoid buffets whenever possible. They promote over-eating with so many choices and the option to return for seconds and thirds.

In addition, remember that you have the option to special order your meal. Ask the wait staff if the chef can prepare your vegetables with olive oil as opposed to butter, or bake your chicken breast instead of frying it.

Finally, one of the most important proactive approaches to healthy eating you can do is to watch your portion sizes. Restaurant portions are typically double what you would normally eat at home. Either request a smaller portion of the desired meal or ask the wait staff to wrap up half the meal right away and take it home to eat the next day.