

## Healthy Guide to Eating Out

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Eating out can be a mental, emotional and social challenge when you are trying to be health-conscious and reduce your weight. Of course, preparing your own meals is the ideal way to monitor the foods that are going into your body and ensuring that they are high-quality and health-promoting. But let's be realistic – work-functions, anniversaries, birthdays or just plain hectic schedules can often lead us to eating out, whether it is a sit-down dinner or a quick take-out meal. There are choices you can make while eating out that are healthier for you and that will keep you from straying from the path to achieving your weight goals.

Here are some healthy tips to keep in mind while eating out:

- if you can, choose a restaurant that has some healthy options available
- order water or tea rather than soft drinks
- choose a healthier side dish or appetizer: salad or vegetables instead of fries or potatoes
- select baked, steamed, broiled or boiled rather than fried foods
- use portion control – if there are size options available, choose a smaller serving
- with rice dishes, see if there is an option to substitute brown rice for white rice
- opt for vinaigrettes or squeezed lemon rather than creamy dressings and dips
- stay away from processed and refined foods, additives, food coloring and artificial ingredients
- avoid breaded or coated foods
- make sure at least half of your meal includes vegetables and greens
- you don't have to finish eating everything on your plate; you can always take your leftovers home to eat at another meal
- remember that dessert is not essential...opt for sliced fresh fruit or just order a tea if you are not yet ready to leave

It is always good to find out which restaurants have healthy selections or the flexibility to alter dishes so they are healthier. This adds a new dimension to eating out, and can make it more enjoyable when you know that you aren't jeopardizing your health goals.