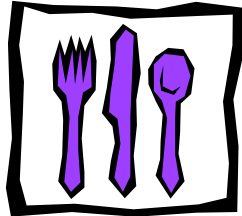


Nutrition Matters

Nutrition Services, Community and Health Services

Healthy eating...on the go! Dining out

Whether it is eating in a restaurant, picking up take-out food, stopping off at a coffee shop, or eating at the cafeteria at work, Canadians are eating away from home more than ever before. This is especially true when it comes to fast food restaurants.



Studies estimate that we spend about one-third of our food dollar on eating out. In addition, a survey of Canadians showed that on the day before their interview, one quarter of Canadians had purchased something from a fast food restaurant.

If you eat out only once in a while, it is fine to have the occasional splurge. However, if you tend to eat out or pick-up take-out foods several times in a week, then you should try to make healthy choices most of the time.

Eating out and being healthy: Can they go hand in hand?

Eating out often means that your meal will be higher in calories, fat, and salt, and lower in fibre. But you can make your experience a more nutritious one by putting some thought into selecting the place and the menu item.



Here are some points to help you enjoy your dining experience while maintaining your healthy eating habits.

Choose restaurants that have a wide variety of foods

Stay away from places that limit eating to one or two choices such as fried chicken or fish and chips. These places often cannot offer healthier alternatives due to the limited choices on their menu.

Avoid buffets

Avoid places that encourage eating to get your money's worth, such as "all-you-can-eat" buffet restaurants. These restaurants may create a situation where you are likely to eat more than you originally intended.

Choose restaurants that offer healthy choices

Go to places that offer more broiled, baked and grilled foods, and less fried foods. Sub and sandwich places often have healthier choices on their menu and allow you to have more control over how your meal is prepared.

Check out menus ahead of time

Many restaurants have websites where they post their menus. Some also include the nutrition facts for their menu items. Other restaurants distribute brochures and pamphlets that provide this information. You can familiarize yourself with the restaurant this way and make your choices based on this information.

Consider restaurants that have received the *Eat Smart!* award



The award assures you that the restaurant meets high standards in nutrition and food safety. These restaurants offer healthy menu options that are lower in fat and include more vegetables and fruit choices. Your special requests will also be accommodated.

Choose wisely

Once you have chosen a restaurant that offers healthy foods, it is up to you to make the wise choice. You may want to consider how the meal is prepared, how big the portion is and whether the meal includes a serving or two of vegetables or fruit.

Make the lower-fat choice

Restaurant meals tend to be high in fat. Fat in foods often brings out tastes and flavours, a reason why restaurants tend to use more fat than we use in home cooking. But fat can also add a lot of calories to your diet. As well, certain types of fat, such as saturated and trans fat may increase your risk for heart disease, stroke, diabetes and some types of cancer.

A menu item may be high in fat because it is made with fatty cuts of meat or higher-fat dairy products. Fat may also be added to meals during preparation. For example, frying or adding cream sauce, butter, oil or high fat cheeses will add more fat and calories to your meal. Be aware of all sources of fat. Use the following table to help you spot menu choices that are higher in fat.

Words meaning <i>less FAT</i>	
Baked	In broth
Broiled	Marinara
Boiled	In white wine
Steamed	Au naturel
Poached	In its own juice
Grilled	Lean
Barbecued	Tomato-based
Skinless	Teriyaki

Words meaning <i>more FAT</i>	
Fried	Au Gratin
Deep-fried	Hollandaise
Battered	Béarnaise
Buttered	Marinated in oil
Breaded	In pastry shells
Sautéed	Scalloped
Creamed	Crispy
With garlic butter	À la mode
Cheesy	Au fromage
Alfredo	Smothered
Cream sauce	Rosé sauce
Tempura	

Be aware of condiments, dressings and extra toppings

Items such as mayonnaise, creamy salad dressings, sour cream, honey-glazed nuts, crispy noodles and bacon will easily add extra fat and calories to your meal.

When it comes to condiments, choose healthier options such as:

- mustard
- ketchup
- salsa
- barbecue sauce
- relish
- honey
- oil or vinaigrette-based salad dressings
- low sodium soy sauce

Go for more veggies, fruit, whole grain and legume choices

These foods contain fibre and essential vitamins and minerals that are important to health. Here are some handy tips:

- Order a salad with your meal, remember to ask for a light dressing served on the side
- Choose an entrée that comes with vegetables
- Have a vegetable soup as an appetizer
- Ask for extra veggies in your sandwich, such as lettuce, tomatoes, green peppers and cucumbers
- Go for a plain baked potato
- Have fruit for dessert
- Go for whole grain breads, barley, whole wheat pasta or brown rice
- Have dishes that contain legumes (beans, chick peas, lentils), such as soups, salads and chili

Make special requests

Restaurants are used to catering to special requests as people are becoming more concerned about what they eat. Don't be afraid to ask for foods to be served your way.



Feel free to ask for a substitution, that an ingredient be left out or that something be prepared in a specific way. For instance, you can ask for a side salad or baked potato instead of French fries, mustard instead of mayonnaise, or tomato sauce instead of a cream sauce. You can also ask for the sour cream, salad dressing or “secret sauce” to be left out or served on the side. Another great way to reduce your fat intake is to order milk in coffee instead of cream.

Many restaurants will also change how they prepare their food to suit your needs. For example, you can ask for the item to be broiled instead of pan-fried, that an entrée be made with less oil or that half the amount of cheese be added to the pizza.

Small-size it

Once you have placed your order, the next step is to control the amount of food you eat. Many restaurants serve such large portions that it could be double what you would serve yourself at home. Do not feel that you have to clean your plate. Try the following portion control strategies.



Portion control strategies

Wrap it up

Listen to your body - eat until you feel comfortably full, not “stuffed”, then ask to have the remainder wrapped to take home.



Share your meal

If you have a willing dining partner, you may want to share an appetizer, an entrée or a dessert.

Ask for half portions






Ask your waiter about the portion sizes of the entrées and request a “half portion” or smaller portion.

Cover your food once you are done

Put your napkin or place your knife and fork entirely over your plate when you feel comfortably full. This will signal to the waiter that you have finished your meal and hopefully the plate will be picked up promptly.

Select healthier menu options wherever you are...



Type of Restaurant	Choose MORE often...	Choose LESS often...
Coffee and breakfast stops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk for coffee or tea • Café latte-type beverage made with low-fat milk • Hot chocolate made with low fat milk • Low-fat, high-fibre muffins • Whole grain bagels with a small amount lower-fat cheese or peanut butter • Yogurt parfait 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cream for coffee or tea • Syrups in speciality coffees • Hot chocolate containing trans fat • Regular muffins, donuts, danishes, tea biscuits, croissants • White bagels loaded with cream cheese • Whipped cream • Fried egg sandwiches with sausage, bacon, or cheese
Sub and sandwich places 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller size subs • Whole grain bread, buns, pita or tortillas • Lean deli meat such as turkey, ham, chicken or roast beef • Grilled chicken • Green salad, fruit salad, bean salad • Vinaigrette-type dressings • Low-fat milk, 100% fruit juice or water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large size subs • Combo meals that include chips • White bread products • Higher fat meats such as salami, bologna, bacon, meatballs • Tuna or salmon salad, egg salad made with regular mayonnaise • Condiments such as creamy dressings, butter, mayonnaise • Soft drinks
Burger places 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single or child-sized burgers • Grilled chicken • Veggie burgers • Plain baked potato • Garden salads with vinaigrette-type dressing or other low fat dressing • Whole wheat bread if available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super-sized combo meals • Double or triple burgers • Hot dogs • Fried chicken burgers/fingers • Fried fish burgers • French fries • Baked potato with sour cream • Milkshakes and soft drinks
Pizza places 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole wheat thin crust • Less cheese (request “easy on the cheese”) • Vegetarian pizza • Vegetable toppings and other lower-fat toppings such as ham and grilled chicken 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White crust • Extra cheese • Toppings such as pepperoni, olives, sausage, bacon, salami • Creamy dipping sauces
Italian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pasta with meatless tomato sauce or other vegetable-based sauce • Baked, grilled, broiled meat or fish dishes served with vegetables • Whole grain bread or buns • Fresh fruit • Cappuccino made with low-fat milk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pasta in meat, cream, or rosé sauce • Breaded, fried or deep-fried meat, fish or seafood • White bread, buns or garlic bread • Pastry desserts and other high fat dessert choices
Chinese, Thai and Japanese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A la carte restaurants • Steamed rice • Noodles in soup • Steamed dumplings and buns • Steamed, grilled or stir-fried dishes • Fresh spring rolls • Sushi or maki without tempura • Teriyaki • Low sodium soy sauce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All-you-can-eat places • Deep fried chicken or shrimp • Deep fried spring or egg rolls • Tempura dishes • Fried rice or noodles • Dishes served with coconut milk-based sauce