

## Tips for Eating Out



You can eat out and eat healthy, too. Many restaurants offer delicious meals that are low in saturated fat, *trans* fat and cholesterol. That's good news for your health because a diet high in saturated, *trans* fats and cholesterol raises blood cholesterol. High blood cholesterol is a major risk factor for heart disease, and it's also a risk factor for stroke.



Don't be shy about making special requests. Most foods on most menus will probably fit into a heart-healthy diet if prepared with low-fat ingredients and less salt. Ask your server if the kitchen can alter preparations to meet your needs, or call ahead before you choose your restaurant. If your food isn't prepared as you requested, send it back.

Equally important is the portion size. Help control your weight by asking for smaller portions, sharing entrees with a companion, or putting half of your meal in a to-go box to enjoy another time.

- Fried, au gratin, crispy, escaloped, pan-fried, sautéed or stuffed foods are high in fat and calories. Instead, look for steamed, broiled, baked, grilled, poached or roasted foods. If you're not sure about a certain dish, ask your server how it's prepared. You can request that visible fat be trimmed from meat and skin be removed from poultry before cooking.

- Request that your meal be prepared with vegetable oil (made from canola, olive, corn, soy, sunflower or safflower) or soft margarine instead of butter. Ask for soft margarine for your bread.
- High-sodium foods include those that are pickled, in cocktail sauce, smoked, in broth or au jus or in soy or teriyaki sauce. Limit these items. Ask that your food be prepared without added salt or MSG.
- Have gravy, sauces and dressings served on the side, so you can control the amount you eat or skip them completely.
- Ask if the restaurant has fat-free or 1 percent milk instead of whole milk.
- Even if they aren't on the dessert menu, many restaurants can offer you fruit or sherbet instead of high-fat pastries and ice creams.
- Many supermarkets and specialty stores offer prepared entrees to take home when you're in a rush; the same tips listed here for restaurants also apply to take-home foods.

*This content is reviewed regularly. Last updated 04/08/2008.*

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