

# You want fries with that?



## Tips for Dining Out Healthfully



Most people wouldn't think of eating two orders of fried steak and eggs for breakfast. But if you order a stack of cream-stuffed hotcakes you're getting about the same number of calories – almost 1,400. The average adult should eat about 2,000 calories per day, and eat no more than 20 grams daily of saturated fat.

“Compared to some of the foods we're seeing in restaurants now, the Big Mac® seems downright dainty,” says Michael Jacobson, executive director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, a nutrition and food safety consumer group.

According to the National Restaurant Association, Americans (ages 8 years and older) eat at restaurants more than 4.2 times per week. And 78% of American adults say social occasions are likely to occur more often at a food establishment than at home. Eating out can be a challenge to weight management, but it doesn't have to be. Here are some tips for eating away from home:

- ✓ **Plan ahead.** Many restaurants now offer online access to their menus and nutrition information. Or call them and ask specific questions about possible healthy, low-fat menu options.
- ✓ **Choose restaurants that offer low-saturated fat, lower calorie menu options,** including salads, soups, stir-fry, or broiled fish.
- ✓ **Look for health-friendly terms on a menu:** light, steamed, baked, broiled, garden fresh, in season, heart-healthy. Words that indicate an unhealthy menu item include: fried, deep-fried, cheese, creamed, or in cream. Avoid these!
- ✓ **Start with a healthy soup or salad** (limit dressing – order it on the side or use lemon juice instead). Soup or salad helps fill you up.

*Beware of salads full of meat and cheese. They can easily add up to 1,000 calories.*



## Special Orders Don't Upset Us

### For breakfast:

- If you order an omelet, ask for it to be made with egg whites or egg substitute – or scrambled tofu.
- Order whole-wheat toast, served without butter. (You can add your own, use jam, or eat it plain.)
- Eat fresh fruit, such as a grapefruit, orange, or berries.

### For lunch or dinner:

- Poultry and fish are generally healthier choices than red meat dishes.
- When eating pasta, a marinara sauce is generally lower in calories than alfredo sauce. Ask if the restaurant serves whole-grain noodles.
- Ask for vegetables or mushrooms in your pasta.
- At Asian restaurants, ask for tofu or nuts in place of meat.

### For dessert:

- If you want dessert, choose something that includes fresh fruit.
- For a frozen treat, order sherbets or fruit sorbets.
- Share a dessert.
- Reserve non-fruity desserts for special, infrequent occasions.

Looking for a restaurant that serves healthy meals? Check out this website:  
[www.healthydining-finder.com](http://www.healthydining-finder.com)

- ✓ **Keep portion sizes small.** Order from the senior or children's menu to receive smaller portions. Place half of your meal in a take-out bag before you eat, or share part of your meal with a friend.
- ✓ **Substitute healthier foods when possible.** Request olive oil in place of butter and brown rice in place of white rice. Ask for whole-grain breads and multigrain pancakes, served with the butter on the side. Request skim- or low-fat milk in place of whole milk. Some fast-food restaurants now offer low-calorie options, such as dinner salads and vegetarian burgers.
- ✓ **Order an item from the menu** instead of heading for the “all-you-can-eat” buffet.
- ✓ **Trim all visible fat off meat.** Request that fatty sauces and cheeses be left off an entrée or sandwich.
- ✓ **Don't drink your calories.** Soft drinks, sugar-sweetened juices, and alcoholic beverages add calories to your meal. Eliminate hundreds of extra calories just by choosing water or a calorie-free beverage when you dine out!

*Center for Science in the Public Interest. 2010.*

