



Eat healthfully when dining out

I've been trying to lose some weight, but lately I've been eating out a lot, both for business and pleasure. How can I keep eating healthfully at restaurants?

It can be a challenge to keep calories under control when eating out. Portion sizes tend to be big, and, if nutrition information isn't available, items that sound healthful on the menu may not be so in reality.

However, with a little planning and determination, you can stay on track and keep shedding pounds, even while dining out. Here are a few tips:

- If you know where you'll be eating, look online for a menu to review ahead of time. This will help in case you find yourself caught up in conversation and not able to study the menu carefully once you get to the restaurant.

- While you're online, see if nutrition information is available, either on the restaurant website or a weight loss or fitness website. It's not always possible to find, but it's worth investigating since most chain restaurants publish this information.

- Don't assume that salad is your best option. With high-calorie dressings, croutons, cheese, fried chicken or other fried toppings, salads can easily put you overboard on calories if you're not careful.

- Look for lean protein — chicken, fish, or lean pork or beef — that hasn't been fried or smothered in sauce. Entrees that are baked, broiled,

grilled or stir-fried are your best options.

- With pasta, choose tomato or marinara sauce instead of cream or cheese sauces. Opt for a dish that doesn't have cheese as a primary ingredient. If the server offers to add freshly grated cheese on your entree, you can control the amount.

- If your meal comes with a side, order a salad or vegetable without butter. If it comes with two sides and there's only one healthy option that sounds appealing, ask for a double order of that item.

- Before you head out, you might want to eat a small portion of lean protein (possibly a high-protein drink or bar) to help you feel satiated and avoid overeating at the restaurant.

- If the portion size is large, ask for a take-home container immediately. Then remove half of the meal from your plate so you aren't tempted to polish it off.

- Watch the beverages. Stick with ice water, diet soda or unsweetened iced tea. Limit alcoholic beverages to one at most.

You can enjoy your time dining out and make healthy choices at the same time. Don't forget your decision to eat a healthy diet when you step through the restaurant door.

Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension, the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, and the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1044, or filipic.3@osu.edu.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

May 10, 2013

By Martha Filipic
614-292-9833
filipic.3@osu.edu

Editor:

This column was reviewed by Carolyn Gunther, community nutrition education specialist for Ohio State University Extension, the outreach arm of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences.

**Communications and
Technology
Strategic Communications**
2021 Coffey Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1044
614-292-2011

208 Research Services
Building
1680 Madison Ave.
Wooster, OH 44691-4096
330-263-3780

Ohio State University Extension embraces human diversity and is committed to ensuring that all research and related educational programs are available to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status. This statement is in accordance with United States Civil Rights Laws and the USDA. *Keith L. Smith, Associate Vice President for Agricultural Administration; Associate Dean, College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences; Director, Ohio State University Extension; and Gist Chair in Extension Education and Leadership. For Deaf and Hard of Hearing, please contact Ohio State University Extension using your preferred communication (e-mail, relay services, or video relay services). Phone 1-800-750-0750 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. EST Monday through Friday. Inform the operator to dial 614-292-6181.*