

# Eating out healthily

Everyone loves eating out – someone else doing the cooking and washing up, so many deliciously tempting foods on offer, someone waiting on your every need and no nutrition labels to remind you how many calories or grams of fat you're consuming. Yet your eating and drinking experience could last the whole evening and it would be easy to pack away all of your calorie (energy) requirements for the day into one single eating occasion.

When you're dining out or having a takeaway treat at home, you don't want to feel like you are missing out, but at the same time, don't allow it to become an excuse to stop following your healthy eating principles. The same healthy eating rules apply whether you are eating at home, in a restaurant or simply just enjoying a picnic in the park on a summer's day.

If you want to make sure that you stay on track when eating out, there are plenty of simple things you can do to help. Read on to find out more:

## Top tips:

- Whether you're at home waiting for your takeaway to arrive or in the office about to head out for dinner, have a small snack like a small bowl of cereal, a yogurt or a couple of pieces of fresh fruit to help take the edge off your hunger and stop you from overeating when your dinner arrives.
- Even if you're ravenously hungry, try not to snack on bar nibbles or complementary canapés (olives, capers, crisps, peanuts) before your meal arrives. Hugely tempting for anyone watching their weight but be careful as those extra calories will soon add up.
- Think about having just two courses or try sharing a starter or a dessert with a friend.
- Be aware that takeaways and restaurant foods are often higher in calories, fat and salt and therefore don't feel embarrassed to ask the waiter or waitress for their healthy eating recommendations or how the food is cooked or prepared.



- If you're out for a buffet meal, rather than trying a little of everything, stick to a few healthy choices. Studies show that the greater the choice of food on offer, the more calories we tend to consume.
- If your meal doesn't come with vegetables, order some as a side dish or have a salad with your meal or as a starter. This will help to fill you up, hydrate you and get you one of your 5-a-day.
- Take your time to appreciate what you're eating and you will be in a better position to take control of what, and how much you eat – don't forget that it takes about 20 minutes for the brain to register you are full.
- If you still feel hungry after your main course, try drinking a couple of glasses of water. It is well known that we often confuse thirst signals for hunger.
- If you do fancy a pudding or are going to feel left out by not having one, try to choose one that is made with fruit (e.g. a fruit crumble or fruit salad) or have a sorbet instead of ice cream. This will provide one of your 5-a-day and will be considerably lower in calories than some of the sweet trolley offerings.

## Alcohol

- Drink smart and watch your alcohol intake. Alcohol can not only stimulate your appetite making you eat more, but it is also high in empty calories (providing seven calories a gram) and can weaken your willpower not to overindulge on food.
- Don't allow someone else to top up your wine glass before it is empty and keep a glass of water in front of you at all times. Alternating alcoholic and non alcoholic drinks will not only hydrate you and help fill you up, but will also help to reduce the amount of alcohol you are drinking.
- Drink plenty of water before you go to bed to rehydrate yourself and help reduce the effects of a hangover.

## Eating out food swaps:

The table below will help you make healthier food choices when eating out in some of the UK's most popular restaurants. Making a few simple foods swaps will help save you calories, and reduce your fat, saturated fat and salt intake without having to compromise on taste and without feeling hungry or deprived.

<b>Restaurant type</b>	<b>Try and swap these foods</b>	<b>For these healthier options</b>
Indian	Poppadoms, pakoras, samosas	Cucumber and mint raita with vegetable sticks
	Creamy curries such as korma, passanda, massala	Tandoori, Dhansac or madras dishes or kebabs with chicken, beef, prawns or vegetables
	Pilau, biryani or fried rice and Peshwari naan	Plain rice and chapatti, vegetable and dhal side dishes
Chinese	Deep fried starters such as spring rolls, prawn toasts, dim sum and prawn crackers	Chicken and sweetcorn soup
	Deep fried or battered dishes e.g. Sweet and sour	Choose lower-fat options such as steamed fish or stir-fries
	Be careful of the soy sauce which is rich in salt	Chicken/beef with black bean sauce, or oyster sauce
	Egg-fried rice	Steamed, boiled rice, egg noodles, rice noodles
Italian	Garlic bread	Mediterranean salad Bruschetta, topped with fresh tomatoes, garlic and basil
	Spaghetti carbonara Lasagne or other creamy pasta dishes	Choose a pasta dish with a tomato based sauce
	Pizzas with lots of cheese, salami, pepperoni etc.	Ask if you can make your own pizza with lots of low fat toppings, such as ham, mushrooms, fish and prawns, egg, rocket etc.
Fish and chips	Large portion of battered fish with chips, sprinkled with salt and	Just have a fish and cut out the calories and fat from the

	vinegar	chips Don't eat the batter, especially if it is soggy as it has soaked up the fat Add your own salt to your fish and chips, so you know how much you're putting on Have a portion of baked beans or mushy peas Try to have a smaller portion, a child's portion or share your fish supper
Kebabs	Doner kebabs	Shish kebab with pitta bread and salad

For more information and practical tips when you're eating out or buying food that has been prepared for you, visit:

The NHS Good Food pages –

<http://www.nhs.uk/LiveWell/Goodfood/Pages/Goodfoodhome.aspx>