

HEALTHY RESTAURANT DINING



Restaurant dining as part of a healthy lifestyle is often difficult for most people. But, it doesn't have to be impossible. Try some of the tactics below the next time you are at a restaurant. Your body, and your taste buds, will thank you!

Tricks of the trade:

- Request that excess butter, oil, and cream sauces be left off (or minimized)
- Ask for dressing and condiments to be served on the side
- Ask to substitute a high fat side with veggies/salad or baked potato/rice
- Ask for a half/lunch portion if available, if very large portions are served
- Enjoy a piece of bread or a handful of chips from the basket, but not the whole basket
- Order milk for kids, instead of soda; unsweetened tea and water over soda
- Ask for whole grain options
- Ask questions about ingredients and preparation in general
- Ask for steamed veggies instead of sauteed or fried
- Keep in mind that salads, especially with creamy dressings, are often among the most fattening meals on most menus
- Enjoy favorite/typical items, but in moderation. You don't have to deprive yourself.
- Share more decadent items with friends.
- Split meals, or plan on taking leftovers home for another meal.

Think Ahead. Many restaurants have menus available on-line, often with nutrition information. Identifying the better options at your family's favorite restaurants will give them flexibility with healthy limits.

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Healthy Options by Cuisine

Steakhouse:

Tomato/broth-based soups
Grilled or broiled meat/seafood Baked potato/rice
Steamed veggies
Side salad
Whole grain bread

Mediterranean:

Hummus, Tabbouleh, or Baba Ganoush
Whole wheat pitas
Greek salad
Feta cheese, yogurt-based dips Great seafood dishes
Grilled dishes
Chickpeas, but Falafel=fried Gyros

Japanese:

Edamame
Sushi, no tempura, spicy mayo on side
Seaweed salad
Hibachi meats, seafood, and veggies (request minimum oil use)
Brown rice, not fried
Rice bowl meals
(Look at Fusion dish ingredients very carefully)

Italian:

Minestrone Soup
Marinara instead of Alfredo sauce
Salad with vinaigrette dressing
Great seafood options

Chinese:

Hot and sour soup
Steamed dishes instead of fried/coated in sugary glaze
Stir-fried veggies and meats use less oil
Lettuce wraps (keep condiments to a minimum)
Brown rice, not fried
Great seafood options
Many buffets provide fresh fruit options

Mexican:

Fajitas
Sub salsa/pico de gallo and guacamole for queso
Grilled dishes, with minimal cheese
Rice and guacamole instead of refried beans
Stuffed poblano peppers

Indian:

Tomato-based (red sauce) dishes
Great vegetarian dishes for sides
Yogurt-based/herb and oil dips
Basmati rice
Un-fried breads/dishes

The Power of Positive Thinking. Focus on the healthy foods that your family enjoys rather than dwelling on the ones that you think you can't have. Try to avoid labeling foods as "good" or "bad," as this can distort your child's view of them.