

Transcript

Dining out is part of our daily lives. Making decisions to eat healthy while dining out will go a long way to controlling your weight, and your overall health.

At restaurants, you have plenty of choices. Here are a few tools to help you make those choices healthy ones.

Your first tool is the menu. Many restaurants highlight nutritional information right on the menu so you can make healthier choices for your personal goals. For example, they may note dishes that are lower in calories, or are heart-healthy selections. The amount of fat, carbohydrate and calories may also be listed.

Just as important as recognizing healthy dishes, it's also important to know what not to choose; and that's not always easy. Here are some words that signal a selection is probably high in fat: creamed, fried, sautéed, crispy and au gratin. Avoid these items when you can, or ask that the meal be prepared differently.

A lot of restaurants are making their menu and nutrition information available on their website: including the amount of calories, saturated fat, sodium and sugar in each item. So, before you decide on a restaurant, take a look at the menu online to make sure healthy choices are available.

If you still have questions, or if they don't have a menu online, call ahead and ask what healthy choices the restaurant offers. If they don't offer any selections you like, check another restaurant. It's your choice.

Once at the restaurant, another tool you can use is your voice. Ask your server what healthy menu items they recommend.

"You could choose either the baked fries on the side or you can do a side salad."

Don't be afraid to ask questions or ask for the chef to make changes to the meal to make it healthier for you. For example, can your fish or chicken entrée be grilled, broiled or baked instead of fried? Can the vegetables be steamed, rather than sautéed?

Be sure to ask if there is any added fat to sides that seem like good choices, like butter added to steamed green beans.

Ask if there are low fat versions of otherwise high-fat or high-calorie items, like: salad dressings, gravy, butter, sour cream or sauces.

And ask that any dressings or sauces be served on the side. This way you can use them sparingly. For salads, try dipping your fork into the dressing and then into the salad.

Soup is usually a great way to fill up on vegetables, just make sure that it isn't a cream or bisque soup.

Filling up on bread or rolls before your meals adds extra calories. You might want to lessen the temptation by asking your server not to bring any bread to the table...

"I'll get that out of your way than."

Or to take it away.

Keep in mind that most meals in restaurants are larger portions than we should need. You might want to ask the server to prepackage half of your meal to take home. This way you eat healthy and have a meal for another day.

Dining out can be quite enjoyable. Making the right choices will help make dining out a more healthy experience too.