

Transcript

Sometimes a dining out situation isn't at a restaurant or fast-food counter. It could be a social gathering, business lunch, or a holiday meal at someone's house. In these situations, you are not in control of what's served, or able to find out the nutritional information. But you can still choose to be in control of what you eat, no matter where you are.

Think of what you can do beforehand so you won't walk into these situations hungry. Like eat something healthy ahead of time, so you're not tempted by the unhealthy choices when you're there.

Having some raw vegetables or a small yogurt before you leave the house can help take the edge off your hunger and set you up to make smarter choices.

At a buffet or cocktail party, choose items that are low in fat, like crunchy vegetables. But go lightly on the dip or choose a low-fat dip option. Drink some water instead of beer or soda. This will help you feel full without adding extra calories. Watch your portion sizes here, too. Use a smaller plate. Stand in a spot away from the food tables to avoid constant nibbling or return visits. Focus on tasting different foods rather than trying to fill yourself up.

When you're faced with a casserole at a potluck or holiday party, and you don't know what all the ingredients are, ask the host how it was prepared. Make an informed choice whenever you can. Also, you can bring a meal that fits your meal plan for your contribution to the potluck, or ask that there be some healthy options at the party.

Remember, a social occasion is just that, social. Spend more time chatting with your friends, family or colleagues. If you eat out because the food is there, or because everyone else is, you may eat more than you planned to and set yourself up for frustration and stress.

Sometimes you may find it difficult to make healthy food choices, especially when it's the holidays or a special occasion like your birthday. Don't worry. A holiday party or social gathering only lasts a day. If you do eat more than you normally would, or foods you wouldn't normally choose, be okay with your choice. Put the party behind you, and get right back to making healthy food choices the next meal or day. If the party is at your house, send leftovers home with your guests so you won't be tempted with extra food around.

At your next social gathering, try to make healthy food choices. You can choose foods low in fat and calories; watch your portion sizes; ask what's in prepared foods; offer to bring something healthy; or even eat before you go. Eat only because you are hungry and not just because it's there. Drink water instead of soda or alcohol. Or, make another change that works for you.

Making healthy food choices at a social function doesn't have to be stressful or a sacrifice. When is your next holiday party or special occasion? Think about what choices you can make ahead of time, so that your party is a healthy experience.