

Making smart choices while eating out.

-Keep in mind why you are eating out. Remember you are there for the atmosphere and the company, in addition to having someone else cook for you!

-Selecting healthy choices when eating foods you haven't prepared yourself involves some forethought. There are a number of ways to ensure that you keep to your goal of food that are primarily low in fat and calories and high in nutrients when eating out.

1. Remember that you can always call the restaurant ahead of time or check the website to see the types of food and drink available. You can ask if the chef is willing to take special requests and prepare meals without added fat. If you eat out regularly, choose restaurants that are happy to cater to your needs. Remember, you are their customer they provide a service to. AND you're paying for it!!
2. If you don't know what is in a dish or how it is going to be cooked, ASK. Often, this will reveal a way to reduce the calories. Example: if a meal is made with cream, you can ask them to replace the cream with a lower fat milk.
3. Request substitutions!! Instead of French fries or chips, it may be possible to ask for a side of fruit, a baked potato, or a side of vegetables. If a substitute is not available, it is always possible to ask that the food be left off your plate!!
4. Look for easy ways to cut calories: like "heart healthy" choices, low fat salad dressings, low-fat or non-fat milk. If a meal comes with a sauce, gravy, or salad dressing, ask for it to be served on the side.
5. Avoid foods with descriptions such as: sautéed, fried, crispy, pan-fried, creamed, in its own gravy, in cheese sauce, or escaloped.
6. Ask for a pitcher of water. If you are a regular customer ask the owner if they could stock low calorie drinks, mineral water, and soda water.
7. Eat small portions. In some restaurants you can order smaller or half-portions for a lower price. Ask for half of the entrée to be put in a take-out container prior to them bringing the plate to the table. Split meals!!

8. Eat slowly!! Enjoy each bite. Savor the meal you didn't have to cook.