

How to Eat Out Healthily

So.....you have been making a conscious effort to eat more healthily. You have been doing really well, you have lost a little weight and you are starting to feel better from the inside.

And then.....you are invited out to the local pub for a meal. Arrgh panic – that's going to undo all your good work.

WRONG!!! You can eat out occasionally, providing you don't throw caution to the wind and end up undoing all your good work. You just need a strategy that will enable you to enjoy the experience without losing sight of your healthy eating habits.

It is well reported that food eaten outside the home contains, on average, more calories, fat and saturated fat than that eaten inside the home. Two main considerations when eating out are to watch out for high calorie and high fat foods/meals. Also be aware that portion sizes in pubs tend to be on the generous side.

Try to avoid or limit alcohol intake. Alcohol has the effect of relaxing you and you will be more likely to throw caution to the wind, lose sight of your healthy eating habits and make poor food choices.

Here are some simple suggestions that can help you:

- If you are unsure about anything on the menu ask for clarification e.g., how is it cooked, what does the sauce contain, how is the food served?
- Grilled, baked, steamed or roast poultry breast, fish and shellfish are the best choices, since they are low in fat.
- Avoid cream or cheese-based sauces – instead choose tomato-based sauces.
- Always ask for sauces, gravy or dressings to be served separately – that way you can control the quantity.
- Request to have 'finishing touches' omitted e.g., cream in a sauce, grated cheese, butter on vegetables, oil drizzled, - this can save considerable amounts of calories and fat.
- Consider sharing a starter and dessert – you still get the experience and the taste but half the calories.
- For a healthy vitamin packed dessert choose a fruit salad or fresh berries. Sorbet is a good refreshing choice rather than ice cream
- Listen to your body – stop when you are full. Don't feel guilty about leaving food.
- Don't feel obliged to order/eat as much as everyone else.
- Ask for your plate to be removed as soon as you have finished – this reduces the chance to nibble food you have decided to leave.
- Enjoy the experience, the company and conversation – this will help you to eat more slowly and give your brain a chance to get the 'I'm full' message.