



Eat Out, Have Fun, Stay Healthy

By: Angela Hansen, RD

One restaurant meal can easily eat up a day's worth of calories and saturated fat, derailing most nutrition-related goals. In order to stay on track with weight loss and health goals, consider a few simple guidelines.

1. Use Online Nutrition information and Menu Calorie Counts

Nutrition information is readily available for most chain restaurants. Additionally, many fast food restaurants post calories on their menus, making it easier than ever to choose healthy options. Focus on total calories and fewer calories from fat to keep things simple. Keeping fats to less than 35% of the total calories is good for your heart and waistline.

2. Get Your Veggies in with Soups and Chilies

Vegetable heavy soups and chili's *can* be excellent choices for adding vegetables and fiber and even some lean protein. Legumes, such as kidney beans, garbanzo beans, or white beans are rich in soluble fiber. A diet high in soluble fiber has been linked to healthier cholesterol levels.

3. Choose Lean Meats, Simply Prepared

Grilled chicken and fish are excellent choices for lean proteins. Canadian bacon and ham are leaner options over sausage and bacon. Consider the in-house veggie burger, you may find a new favorite.

4. Include Healthy Fats

Tomato-based sauces are lower in fat and calories than Alfredo or cream sauces on pastas. Melted cheese or creamy sauces on sandwiches add unhealthy fat and calories

quickly. Skip the mayo and cheese - add a slice of avocado or a smear of guacamole instead! Olive oil based salad dressings add similar calories but are healthier than creamy dressings.

5. Use Healthy Sides to Fill Half your Plate with Fruits and Vegetables

Consider steamed, fresh vegetables, fresh fruit, or a crisp house salad in place of fries at lunch; at breakfast swap a fruit cup for those greasy hash brown potatoes for increased fiber and vitamins. At the hotel-provided breakfast, grab some Greek yogurt, a boiled egg, or some peanut butter for protein. A banana, apple, plain oatmeal, or whole wheat bread are healthier carbohydrate choices. Grab an extra piece of fruit for a mid-morning snack to keep you on track.

6. Beverages: Potential Calories Ahead!

Alcoholic and sugar-sweetened beverages can eat up your calorie budget in a hurry. Consider smaller portions, herbal, unsweetened iced teas, or sparkling water for healthier choices.

For more personalized information, make an appointment with your dietitian. She can assist you in making sustainable lifestyle choices that will stick!

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