

Eating Out With Diabetes

The Challenge

Food prepared away from home can be high in calories, fat, sugar, and sodium. Planning ahead can help you follow a healthy meal plan when eating out. Here are some tips to make it easier:

- Know your meal plan well, and try to stick to it.
- Call ahead to ask what is on the menu. Some restaurants serve “heart-healthy” or “lite” items that will fit your needs. Often, restaurant chains provide nutrition information in their restaurants or over the Internet. Even if you can’t call ahead, ask the server for nutrition information.
- For a party, ask your host ahead of time what is being served. Offer to bring a dish if the food seems heavy on fat, sugar, or sodium.
- Decide what you will eat before you arrive. If you know what you want, you will be less tempted by unhealthy choices.
- Do not go too hungry. Eat a small snack so that you will not overeat.
- Learn how to switch among carbohydrate foods so that you have more choice and better blood glucose control.
- Only drink alcohol with your doctor’s permission. Limit yourself to one or two drinks a day. Since alcohol can greatly lower blood sugar, drink with someone who knows how to treat low blood glucose reactions. Always wear visible diabetes identification. One drink equals 4 ounces of dry wine, 1½ ounces of hard liquor, or 12 ounces of light beer.
- If portions are large, share with a friend, or take the extra amount home.
- If only a buffet is offered, look it over before you choose. Select only those foods that you really enjoy. Have plenty of empty space around each serving. Always sit down away from the buffet, and eat with a utensil.
- If you overeat, be more active afterward.

What to Choose

Appetizers: Clear soup or broth, raw vegetables, salad with low calorie dressing, tomato juice, or fresh fruit cup.

Entrees: Grilled, roasted, boiled, or poached skinless poultry, lean meat, fish, or seafood. Have sauce or gravy served on the side or left off. If the only choice is fried food, peel the breading off.

Potatoes and substitutes: Baked or boiled without added fat. Ask for margarine and reduced-fat sour cream on the side, so that you can control the amount added.

Vegetables: Steamed, baked, or grilled. Avoid cheese sauce or other high fat or high sugar toppings.

Breads: Whole wheat or enriched white bread and rolls, small muffins and biscuits, corn tortillas, English muffins, hamburger and hot dog buns, low fat crackers, and flat breads.

Fats: Soft or liquid margarine, reduced-fat salad dressings, or liquid vegetable oils.

Desserts: Fresh fruit, small scoop of ice cream, frozen yogurt or sorbet, or small slice of unfrosted cake.

Beverages: Coffee, unsweetened tea, sugar-free soft drinks, skim milk, or water.

Questions to Ask:

1. How can I get nutrition information about the food served in local restaurants? _____

2. What can I choose at my favorite restaurants that will fit my meal plan? _____
