



Family Wellness First: Nutrition

pathwaystofamilywellness.org

Eating Healthy When Eating Out

How often you eat out or attend food-related social gatherings will determine how selective you need to be at any given outing. If you eat out virtually every day of the week for example, you're going to want to be as prudent as possible, as much as possible, when making food selections. If you only go out to eat once a month however, you can probably get away with eating whatever you like if you're consistently eating well at home.

Since eating outside the home a few times a month or even a few times a week is the case for most people however, arming yourself with the following tips will help keep your intentions for good eating and good health on track.

Social Gatherings: For social gatherings with family and friends, you can let your host or hostess know in advance that you're following a special diet. If it's someone close to you and it feels comfortable, you may like to share more details and even make special requests. You could also suggest bringing a dish to share that you know you'll be able to eat, so as not to have to trouble them with your particular needs. For potlucks, you can similarly bring and eat a dish or two of your own.

Whether you're planning to eat at a restaurant or attend a social gathering, another wise strategy is to eat before you go. Doing so is especially helpful when you know you won't have any control over what will be served, and know there will be little, if any, healthy food available.

If you eat before you go, you can have a few nibbles when you get there without causing a lot of damage, or you can just socialize and not eat at all. Either way, plan in advance how you'll deal with the situation and you'll greatly increase your chances of controlling it, rather than having it control you.

Eating at Restaurants: When it comes to restaurant dining you often have more control over your food choices. You can patronize establishments that serve only whole, fresh, natural foods as much as possible, for example. Fortunately, at least in the more urban areas of the country, they seem to be popping up more and more. And, whether you're in a healthy restaurant or not, you can always choose what to order and how much to eat once it arrives.



Try these tips to help you keep on track:

- order grilled vegetables instead of French fries, or fresh fruit instead of a sugary muffin or toast
- ask that the breadbasket or chips and salsa *not* be brought to the table as soon as you arrive
- or, take a reasonable portion out of the basket and put it on your plate to keep you from mindlessly eating straight from the basket
- drink a cup of herbal tea or a large glass of water before your order arrives
- avoid appetizers before, and desserts after your meals
- order a healthy appetizer or a dish from the children's menu for your meal
- order a main dish and big salad and split it with your dining companion
- portion off your plate when it arrives
- have your plate removed as soon as you're satisfied
- request that only half your order be brought to the table and have the rest doggie bagged

Establishing and Advancing the Chiropractic Family Wellness Lifestyle

Don't be afraid to assert yourself at restaurants. Remember that you're paying them to serve you. Be pleasant, however. That way you'll be more likely to get your requests pleasantly fulfilled.

Have a 'Planned Indulgence'

All of this talk about avoiding this, and switching this for that, reminds me of another wise guideline for eating out: *on occasion, just go out and eat whatever you want, however much you want!* Seriously. you don't want to completely take the fun from dining out. It's probably going to happen on occasion anyway, so you might as well give yourself permission rather than beating yourself up about it later. Please note, however, that I said *on occasion*, preferably a *rare occasion*.

Planned indulgences aside, it's best to limit the amount of time you eat out overall. The inclination to eat low-quality foods and more of them, is just too great when you're eating out. Preparing foods at home, where you have total control over all ingredients, is always your best choice from a health and well-being standpoint, especially if you're trying to manage your weight or reverse a health condition



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For more information on *Eating for Health* including a **FREE REPORT** ~ *Secrets to Overcoming Unhealthy Food Cravings*, visit: www.kellyhayford.com/report or call 209-815-1444.

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