



# Optimal Health University™

Presented by Dr. David Hoff

## Your Healthy Guide to Dining Out

If you're trying to eat better then you'll definitely want to review this article where we will reveal tips and strategies to help you choose healthy options to keep off the pounds when you're dining out. In our rapid-paced world, a trip to our favorite restaurant or fast food drive thru is a weekly occurrence for a lot of us. It can certainly be a time saver, but the impact of large restaurant meals and fast food can take its toll.

In a three-year study that looked at fast food eating among women, researchers commented, "Over 3 years, increases in frequency of fast food restaurant use were associated with increases in body weight, total energy intake, percentage of fat intake, intake of hamburgers, French fries and soft drinks, and with decreases in physical activity, dietary restraint and low-fat eating behaviors."

While scores of eating establishments are switching to healthier menu choices, the portion size of one restaurant meal can be as much as five regular meal servings. Endless refills of soft drinks are standard at a lot of restaurants, and this can swell your calorie intake.

Fast foods are frequently high in fat and low in nutrients. Many restaurants are eliminating or reducing trans fats in their foods. This is certainly a positive trend. But foods high in saturated fats continue to be a main staple on menus. This type of food is also typically very high in sodium, which when consumed creates a risk factor for hypertension.

### Smart Dining Options

Even before you go to a restaurant, there are a couple actions you should take:

- 1.) See if the restaurant's menu is available online. Knowing what is available ahead of time allows you to plan a healthy meal in advance without any pressure.
- 2.) Eat a wholesome snack so you don't arrive with an empty stomach.

### Some other tips:

**Avoid buffet style eateries.** The amount of food you eat is important too. A buffet practically begs you to visit it more than once, and this can be too big a temptation to resist.

**Bank your calories.** Instead of eating three full meals daily, eat a couple of lighter meals and use your restaurant selection as your main meal of the day. Ask your server if the restaurant has a nutrition sheet on its menu items.

**Get it on the side.** When you order salad with dressing, ask for the dressing to be put on the side. This way you control the amount used and can nix some extra calories.

**Look for these labels.** Be aware of meals containing foods that are fried, battered or breaded.

**Chicken undressed.** When it comes to poultry dishes, choose skinless choices.

**Watch the sauce.** If you order soup or pasta with sauce, avoid cream-based ingredients as these can pack a wallop of extra calories and saturated fat.

**Drink Water.** Consuming water helps give your stomach a full feeling without adding calories. If you really don't like water plain, add a slice of lime or lemon to it.

**Dine in. Take out.** You don't have to eat everything on your plate in one sitting. Take half of your restaurant meal home with you.

**Food is for sharing.** Another option is to share your entrée and dessert with a friend or family member.

**Coffee counts.** If you like to fancy up your coffee drink with lots of whip cream, sugar or syrup, prepare to pay a high caloric price. Choose sugar free sweetening options or switch occasionally to clear tea.

**Take it slow.** Chew your food thoroughly and delight in each bite. By slowing down your eating, you give your body more time to alert you when it's full.

**Focus on your food.** Avoid eating while watching TV or engaging in other activities as this makes you less aware of how much food you're actually eating.