

Healthy Directions for Eating out at Lunchtime

Studies show that eating out at restaurants is contrary to goals of successful weight loss and maintenance. Realistically, in our society today eating out, especially for working folks is unavoidable. If you must, here are some healthy directions to help you through. Lunch is the most common meal eaten away from home. Considering lunch contains about one fourth of the calories/food we consume in a day, the first guideline is to **know your limits**. For the "average person" who gets moderate daily exercise and is maintaining weight (not trying to lose), the general recommended daily intakes are 2000 calories, 100gm protein, 250 gm carbohydrates 66 gm fat (w < 10 gm saturated), 300 mg cholesterol, and 2000mg Sodium and 25-35 gm fiber. Divided by 4 that means **lunch should contain about 500 calories, 25 gm protein, 63 gm carbs, 16 gm fat, 75 mg cholesterol, 500 mg sodium and about 7 gm fiber**. Second guideline is to **start reading labels**. When eating out and labels are unavailable ask questions or first go to the websites of your favorite restaurants. Click on nutrition information and be prepared for some shocking information. Utilize menu builders, if available to select the healthiest choices to meet your goals. For example, avoid the Panini sandwiches which check in at 700-900 calories with 30 gm of fat, and go for the simpler turkey sub with extra veggies, no oil or dressing—try avocado instead. Rather than cheeseburger & fries, choose grilled chicken sandwiches, no sauce & extra lettuce and tomato. Better yet, try new salad options with fruit, or beans, grilled chicken and light vinaigrettes. Third guideline is **choose restaurants that offer healthy choices and substitutions**. An example is Souplantation type vs. a deli or fast food. There you have lots of choices to meet your 5+ a day fresh fruit/vegetable recommendation. Choose broth based soups, plain fruits and vegetables over "heavily dressed" salads like potato, pasta and cole slaw, and use oil & vinegar. Steer clear of the muffins, pasta & dessert unless it's fruit, or lowfat frozen yogurt. Japanese restaurants offer healthier choices like Edamame; seafood, wakame and cucumber salads; sashimi and green tea. Steer away from the deep fried and sauced items, sushi with cream cheese, dressings and mayonnaise. Fourth guideline is to **always watch your portion sizes, and avoid "accessorizing"** with bread & butter, chips, cookies and sauces. For more info contact HEALTHY DIRECTIONS OF POWAY. Next month we'll talk about great lunches you can easily make at home. We also do **Grocery Tours to help you decipher choices at the store. Our next one is scheduled for JUNE 6th at 6:30 pm. Call for details & sign-up at 858-335-2140.**