

# Eating Out

Note to the Health Care Provider: Topics in this handout are discussed in Chapter 19 of the *American Dietetic Association Guide to Diabetes Medical Nutrition Therapy and Education* (1).

## **When counseling clients with diabetes on eating out, consider the following strategies:**

- Discuss ways to select healthier options at their favorite restaurants.
- Recognize that eating out may be a way that clients socialize with friends and family.
- Encourage clients to make special requests when eating out. Some clients may be hesitant to do so.
- Help clients enjoy favorite foods when they eat out.

## **Reference**

1. Warshaw HS. Advanced topics in diabetes nutrition management. In: Ross TA, Boucher JL, O'Connell BS, eds. *American Dietetic Association Guide to Diabetes Medical Nutrition Therapy and Education*. Chicago, IL: American Dietetic Association; 2005:218-226.



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## Eating Out and Staying in Control

You may find it hard to control your blood glucose when you eat out. Portion sizes at restaurants can be too big. Foods on menus are often high in calories, fat, and salt but low in fiber.

You can learn to make healthy choices and control your blood glucose when you eat out. Talk with your registered dietitian (RD) about the restaurants you visit and the foods you like to order. Your RD can help you find ways to stay within your meal plan and still enjoy your favorite foods. Here are some tips to try.

### Daily Alcohol Limits

If it is safe for you to drink alcohol, stay within healthy limits. Women who choose to drink should limit alcohol to one drink a day or less. Men should limit alcohol to two drinks a day or less.

#### One drink equals:

- 12 ounces of beer
- 5 ounces of wine
- 1½ ounces of liquor

## Tips for Cutting Calories

- Avoid all-you-can-eat buffets.
- Skip the baskets of bread, crackers, or chips.
- Drink coffee, tea, sugar-free soda, water, or low-fat or nonfat milk with your meal.
- If you are ordering an entrée, skip the appetizers.
- If you drink alcohol, limit how much you drink.

## Tips for Portion Control

- Share a meal with a friend.
- At dinner, ask for the lunch-size or child's portion.
- When you order, get a to-go container and pack up half of your food as soon as it arrives.
- Instead of an entrée, choose an appetizer or soup with a salad.
- Learn how to estimate portion sizes. The following chart can help.

## Sizing Your Portions

Food	Portion Size	One Portion Looks Like
Pancake	1 ounce (1 carb and 1 fat choice)	CD
Bread	1 ounce (1 slice) (1 carb choice)	CD cover
Pasta or rice	1 cup (3 carb choices)	Tennis ball
Baked potato	1 medium potato (1½ to 2 carb choices)	Computer mouse
Vegetables, chopped	1 cup	Baseball
Fruit	1 small piece of fruit (1 carb choice)	Tennis ball
Lean meats	3 ounces	Deck of cards
Fish	3 ounces	Checkbook
Dressings and/or oils	1 teaspoon	Tip of your thumb



## Tips to Trim the Fat

- Have salads without bacon bits, cheese, and croutons.
- Order sauces and dressings on the side.
- Choose tomato-based sauces and soups instead of types made with cream.
- Ask that dishes be made with less cheese or none at all.
- Choose lean meats, such as skinless chicken or fish.
- Have **small** portions of meat and fish (about the size of a deck of cards).
- Choose foods that are grilled, steamed, boiled, baked, or broiled (without oil or butter).
- Instead of fries, order a baked potato.
- If you plan to have dessert, keep it light. Fresh fruit and sorbet are good choices.



## Tips to Cut Down on Salt

- Ask the cook to make foods without salt. Dishes may be made with salt-free herbs and spices instead.
- Skip sauces and dressings.
- Be aware that soups are often high in salt.
- Order fish or meat without breading.
- Ask for plain rice, pasta, or potatoes.

## Tips to Fill Up on Fiber

- Start your meal with a vegetable salad; top with vinegar, lemon juice, or a teaspoon or two of dressing.
- When you have a sandwich, pile on the vegetables. Good choices are lettuce or spinach, tomatoes, peppers, and onions.
- Choose brown rice, whole grain breads, and whole wheat pasta when you can.
- If you want dessert, try a fruit cup or slice of melon.

## Remember . . .

To keep blood glucose in control when eating out, people with diabetes need to:

- Plan ahead.
- Ask questions about how foods are cooked or prepared.
- Make special requests.

One or two hours after you eat, check your blood glucose to see how you are doing.

**A final tip:** An after-dinner walk can help burn some of the extra calories from eating out!