

# Dining out increases weight gain

Dining out has become a national pastime. Whether you enjoy breakfast, lunch or dinner out on the town, the adage of "what passes through the lips, turns up on the hips" is becoming a growing problem.

Most fast food restaurants and sit-down convenience restaurants offer a bevy of foods that tip the scales in terms of calorie, fat and sodium content.

But there still are ways to dine healthy when eating out. You just have to be more cautious in your selections.

Here are some meal options you may want to consider in lieu of unhealthy, albeit tasty, options on the menu.

## Fast Food

Fast food is convenient and delicious to many.

However, it is notorious for boasting high fat and sodium contents. Consider these healthier selections.

1. Subway(R): This sandwich chain has been making waves for years with their healthy "Eat Fresh" menu selections.

There are many options on the menu that come in at reasonable calorie counts and fat grams of 10 or less.

New is the Tuscan Chicken Melt with 370 calories and 9 grams of fat.

2. Taco Bell(R): The popular southwestern food chain offers items that can be healthier, provided you skip some of the condiments (think guacamole and sour cream). Try two Ranchera Chicken Soft Tacos for only 340 calories and 8 grams of fat.

3. Wendy's(R):#If you're hitting this burger chain, you can look to their value menu for a cup of chilli and a baked potato with sour cream and chives, which will only set you back 10 grams of fat and 370 calories.

At burger restaurants, you can also shave off fat and calories by selecting a "Jr." sized burger instead of the unhealthy packaged meal options. Those junior burgers are much more in line with the appropriate serving size than the "adult" meals.

4. McDonald's(R):#McDonald's may be revamping their healthy options for children. However, adults are still limited to a few options.

Apart from a salad (skip the high-fat dressing) another option could be the premium grilled chicken sandwich at 420 calories and 10 grams of fat.

5. Burger King(R):#When dining out at Burger King, one of the healthier options is the Tendergrill Chicken Sandwich (minus the mayo), which is 380 calories and 7 grams of fat. -courtesy of Zagat's second fast food survey results

## Slow-Food Restaurant Chains

Taking the family out for a meal or enjoying a night out with friends? Restaurant chains in the area are popular choices for a night of fun and good food.

However, they could be offering you more than you bargained for in terms of fat and calories. Look for the "smart menu" or "dining light" areas of the menu for healthier options.

1. Applebees(R): Look to Applebees' "Weight Watchers(R) Menu" for healthy meal options that offer caloric and fat breakdowns, as well as conversion to the "points" system of the popular weight loss plan.

You can enjoy Garlic Herb Chicken, for example, for 370 calories and 6 grams of fat.

2. T.G.I. Friday's(R):#The chain's "Right Portion, Right Price" menu paved the way for smaller portions at lower prices. They also have a "Better for You" section of the menu with meals that contain no more than 500 calories and 10 grams of fat per serving.

3. Chili's(R):#Look to Chili's "Guiltless Grill" menu section for healthy options, like Guiltless Grilled Salmon at 480 calories and 14 grams of fat, most of which come from the important omega fatty acids of the fish.

4. Outback Steakhouse(R):#The Outback has been known for high-fat items, such as its Bloomin' Onion and Kookaburra Wings. However, new to the menu are "Healthy Weight Loss," "Heart-Healthy Diet," and "High Protein, Low Carbohydrate" choices.

A visit to the restaurant's Web site offers suggestions on how to make the chain's regular menu items healthier by asking for garnishes to be removed or to have the food cooked without butter.

5. Ruby Tuesday's(R): This chain has a lot of calorie-laden foods (even the Ruby Minis have




1,122 calories), but a visit to the salad bar could be a much healthier option, provided you choose a low-calorie dressing.

6. The Cheesecake Factory(R): Large portions, a novel-sized menu and delicious desserts can make this popular restaurant the downfall of many individuals. A new menu selection, Weight Management Grilled Chicken(TM), is

a better option.

If you take the time to do a little research and page through the menus of area restaurant chains and fast food establishments you can find healthier options that are better for the waistline and overall health. -courtesy of John's Hopkins University




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