



# YES AND NO'S TO EATING OUT

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“Tick tock, tick tock,” busier lifestyles and a female work force has resulted in less time to prepare healthy, nutritious meals. More and more families are buying ready-made meals, ordering take-out or dining at restaurants as it’s not only delicious, but convenient, easy and timely. But is what we are eating healthy? Here are a few ways to make healthier decisions when eating out.

## RESTAURANTS AND TAKE-OUT

Eating out should be considered a treat, something you do once-in-a-while, as many options are high in calories, fat and salt and often contain minimal amounts of vegetables, fruit and fibre. With health as a trending topic and people wanting to live healthier lifestyles, restaurants and fast food outlets have added healthier options to make things a little easier. Below you will find tips to help you choose wisely.

### 1. Less is more

Super-sized larger portions often cost only a little extra, this makes us feel like we need to order the larger portion as its better value for money, but is the health “cost” worth it? Research has shown that the larger the serving placed in front of us, the more food we tend to consume. <sup>(3)</sup> Always remember that double the portion = double the calories. Try eating the same portion size you would eat at home, this can be achieved by sharing or putting the extra food in a container to go. <sup>(4)</sup> It’s not necessary for you to have a starter, main and dessert, choose wisely. Sharing a starter or dessert is always a great idea. When ordering a burger, lose the top bun and you will instantly be cutting down on calories, this is a great habit to have.

### 2. Be wise when ordering fries

Yes, fries are delicious, but adding extra calories, fat and sodium is not ideal. If there is just no way you will order a different side, then choose the smallest portion or only eat half of the fries served. <sup>(3)</sup> Opting for a side-salad, mixed stir-fry vegetables or roasted vegetables is a much better option, not only are you getting in less calories you also get some vitamins, minerals and fibre in.

### 3. Design it yourself

Change up the menu and do it your way, keeping the calories, sodium and fat on track. If an item is fried, asked for it grilled instead. <sup>(5)</sup> If a salad comes drenched in salad dressing it kind of defeats the object of ordering a salad in the first place so rather ask for your sauces and dressings on the side, this way you are able to control the amounts



consumed. When ordering salad, try leafy green salads, skip the bacon bits, croutons and creamy dressings. <sup>(5)</sup> Olive oil and balsamic vinegar is much healthier than creamy mayo-dressings.

#### **4. Reading in-between the lines**

When reading the menu, words can be very convincing, leading to one ordering something completely different than initially planned. It's good to go out with a plan of what you want to order beforehand and only looking at that specific section of the menu to prevent temptations. If tempted, then look out for the following descriptive words: breaded/crumbed, creamy, crisp, sauced or stuffed, these are usually loaded with hidden fats. Other words to look out for include: pan-fried, deep-fried, buttery, sautéed and au gratin. <sup>(5)</sup>

#### **5. Skip the bread basket**

If the restaurant offers a bread basket on arrival tell your waitress that you want to skip this, once the basket is in front of you it will be very challenging to say no.

#### **6. Drinks**

It is always challenging to get people to realise that their drinks are loaded with sugar and calories, sometimes this may amount to more calories than a whole meal. Having 2 to 3 sodas while out will add countless calories which is just not worth it. Rather opt for healthier choices such as light or zero drinks, choose ice-tea, when ordering alcohol take a single (not a double) and choose a light/zero mix, order a glass of wine instead of a bottle. Milkshakes, cocktails and flavoured syrup coffees should be seen as a treat and not ordered on every dining experience. If your sweet-temptation is just too persistent order the smallest sized sugary drink possible. <sup>(3)</sup> Remember there is nothing wrong with ordering water, after all this is what is best.

#### **7. Sweet temptations**

Think fresh and light when it comes to dessert. Fruit salad, plain frozen yogurts and sorbet are much healthier options. <sup>(3)</sup> Portions are also very important, cake and large cookies can add as much as 400 calories to your meal (to burn these calories from exercise you would need to run about 7km but this depends on your weight and running pace). <sup>(6)</sup> Still want dessert? Order one dessert and ask for many spoons to share with family and friends. Alternatively have one block of dark chocolate when getting home.

#### **8. Dress to impress**

Dressing up and making an event out of the dining experience even if it's a family restaurant will help change your view about eating out. <sup>(5)</sup> If you see eating out as an occasion, event or treat instead of an everyday thing you won't eat out as often. Not only is this excellent for your body, your wallet will be happy too.



## CONCLUSION

So eating out or having take-aways is part of our lives, enjoy it and always see it as a treat. Taking the above tips into consideration as a lifestyle change will surely give you great results. Living a healthy, happier life with more vitality and zest. It's always the small things that count the most.

### WHERE DOES FUTURELIFE® FIT IN?

FUTURELIFE® products are convenient on-the-go meals or snacks. You just add water or milk and you are good to go! FUTURELIFE® is also a great addition to smoothies. For recipes, go to our website at: [www.futurelife.co.za](http://www.futurelife.co.za)

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