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HEALTHY RESTAURANT EATING

By Arleen M. Kaptur

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Everyone enjoys a night out. Days are filled with commitments, obligations, meetings, errands, chores, and a myriad of other responsibilities that color our daily lives, even our very existence. To step back from this cycle of activity and go to a restaurant, have someone else serve you, cook the meal, wash the dishes, and clean up is a mini-vacation we all can appreciate.

When you dine out, you can't leave your good sense or your healthy eating habits on the wayside, to be picked up when you return home. It doesn't make sense to work so hard to attune yourself to health-wise eating habits, and possibly undue all the good work with one calorie-laden, overly fat, sugary, and empty calorie meal. Your heartburn will gladly remind you of your sins.

When you go to a restaurant, eat smart. There are a few tips so that you can thoroughly enjoy your evening, and go home refreshed, relaxed, and in great health. You will have nothing to be sorry for from a nutrition standpoint and you won't have to run the high school track field to get back to the point you were at before you had dinner "out."

Salads are great accompaniments to any meal. Ask for your choice of dressing on the side. This way you are sure you are in control of the amount that is poured onto the delicious salad ingredients that should be appreciated for their particular taste. Two to three teaspoons of dressing on a side-plate salad is an ample addition to your salad. You can also ask for oil and vinegar cruets and mix your own dressing.

Avoid foods that are fried, even though fried foods are a tasty morsel. Choices of roast turkey, broiled chicken, lean ham, flank steak, broiled shrimp, broiled

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cod, steamed crab, spaghetti, are a few very smart choices from a restaurant menu. You can also sabotage your great decision with a lot of sauces, or gravies. So just use these as flavor enhancers and not flavor cover-ups.

Fresh fruit is a great choice for dessert. How about adding some angel food cake, sherbet, or jello. You can have your dessert and eat it too.

Eat modest portions and try to appreciate the food's flavor without a lot of additional items that take away from its natural goodness. Fruits and vegetables are taste sensations when eaten alone, but you can add a few touches to satisfy your sweet tooth. Also remember that an occasional splurge is nothing to feel guilty about. Your mind will never tell your stomach, so it will never know to add those calories to your weight scale.

Enjoy your meal out and have fun with family or friends. You deserve it!

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Arleen Kaptur has written numerous articles for magazines/newspaper/e-zines. Author: **SEARCHING FOR AUSTIN JAMES** Member: NAWW, Author's Den, Reviews/ Column/Amazing Authors Website: <http://www.rusticliving.info> <http://www.webspawner.com/users/rusticliving/index.html>

Eating Out Can Be Hazardous To Your Waistline

By Lee Dobbins

Going out to eat can really put the brakes on your weight loss program unless you have exceptional control over what you eat. Although many restaurants now offer choices for many types of diets, it's what's on the rest of the menu that might tempt you to stray. Often high in salt, sugar and oil most restaurant food tends to be higher in calories than what you might prepare for yourself.

And Americans are eating out more and more. According to Dr. Caroline Cederquist, a physician who specializes in weight management, less than 20 percent of the calories Americans consumed were eaten outside the home in 1978 but in 2003, that number had climbed to 50 percent. Combine that with the fact that obesity in Americans is growing each year with as many as two thirds of Americans being overweight and you might come to the conclusion that eating out can be hazardous to your waistline.

One problem is that restaurants often serve huge portions. That combined with the fact that we have been conditioned to clean our plates can result in a huge weight problem. You may feel morally obligated to eat everything on your plate—even if your health and your weight might suffer as a result. If you eat out a lot, you may become accustomed to these large portions and start to eat like that at home as well.

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Another problem with restaurant eating is that they often serve bread or rolls - and usually not the healthy whole wheat kind either. Now, when you know you are going out to eat, you probably eat less throughout the day or delay or skip eating and by the time you get to the restaurant you are starving. So what do you do when they bring the rolls? Of course, you dig in eating way to many rolls.

You might be dining with a group that likes to savor the experience and order appetizers before the meal but did you know that restaurant appetizers tend to be extremely high in calories? For example, a basket of fried onions can have a whopping 2,000 calories. Eat a few appetizers to be polite and you'll have to run the treadmill for hours to work it off!

Many restaurants now offer free soda refills. Plus the soda glasses tend to be large to begin with so you are receiving greater servings of this sugary beverage. The tendency may be to order seconds because it's free and you want to take advantage of that but remember, just the soda alone can put you far over your daily recommended allowance of calories for weight loss.

Perhaps the greatest restaurant challenge to any dieter is the buffet. With so many choices you may be tempted to get one of everything! Since you can go back as many times as you want you might overindulge. You want to make sure you get your moneys worth, right?

So what can you do if you must eat out several times a week? First of all, make sure you stick to your diet plan. Don't give in to eating wrong foods "just this once." Choose entrees that have lots of vegetables and avoid dessert entirely. When your meal comes, set half aside immediately and even ask for a doggy bag right away so you won't be tempted to eat the second half when the first is done. Don't starve yourself before going out to eat and you will be better able to avoid eating those rolls as well as overeating when the meal comes. If you are not starving when you order, it will be easier to

order a healthy meal and stay away from fatty, high calorie entrees.

Generally, if you stick to sensible and healthy eating patterns both at home and when eating out you will be developing good eating habits that will help you lose weight and keep it off for life.

Lee Dobbins writes about

as well as other weight loss issues. Visit

www.lowcarb-resource.com for more articles on healthy dieting.



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