

Healthier eating out or takeaway

4 minute read | Produced: 2016 | Revised: August 2021



Key points:

- Order smaller portions.
- Choose salad and vegetable side dishes.
- Choose grilled or baked options instead of deep fried.
- Select lean cuts of meat instead of processed meats.
- Share a dessert.
- Choose still, sparkling or mineral water.

Restaurant and takeaway foods are often high in kilojoules, saturated fat, sugar and salt. Follow these tips to make a healthier choice when ordering off the menu.

Top tips for making a healthier choice

1. Listen to your hunger cues. Order an entrée sized portion or share a meal with a friend if you are not very hungry.
2. Swap out chips for a side of vegetables or salad.
3. Ask for sauces and dressings to be served on the side. Where possible, opt for an olive oil or vinegar-based dressing.
4. Choose grilled or baked foods instead of deep-fried options (such as crumbed or battered items).
5. Swap out greasy pastries with fresh sandwiches or wraps.
6. Select lean cuts of meat such as skinless chicken, lean beef and fish instead of highly processed meats such as salami, sausages and bacon.
7. When choosing a dessert, consider sharing with a friend or choosing a fruit-based option. Where possible, swap out cream or ice-cream for yoghurt.
8. When choosing a drink, swap out alcoholic beverages and sugary drinks for still, sparkling or mineral water.

Remember:

- Order an entrée sized portion or share a meal with a friend if you are not very hungry.
- Choose grilled or baked foods instead of deep-fried options.
- When choosing a dessert, consider sharing with a friend.
- Swap out alcoholic beverages and sugary drinks for still, sparkling or mineral water.

Recommendations for healthier choices

Sandwiches and burgers

- Choose wholegrain or wholemeal bread when available.
- Load up on plenty of vegetables or salads.
- Choose hummus or avocado as an alternative to butter or margarine.
- Limit use of mayonnaise and sauces.

Asian food

- Choose mixed vegetable dishes.
- Pick vegetable-based side dishes such as edamame.
- Order steamed rice instead of fried.
- Choose rice paper rolls, sushi and sashimi containing vegetables and lean meats.
- Limit deep fried foods such as spring rolls, tempura fried foods, fried noodles and dishes containing coconut cream/milk.
- Avoid adding salty and/or sugary sauces such as soy, hoisin and sweet chilli.

Italian

- Choose pasta dishes with tomato or vegetable-based sauces instead of creamy varieties.
- Choose thin pizza bases with a variety of vegetables.
- Best choices are vegetarian or chicken-based pizzas instead of classic pepperoni and meat-lovers style options.

Mexican

- Order a soft taco or burrito instead of hard-shell taco.
- Include plenty of salad in your soft taco/burrito.
- Choose refried beans as your main protein source and only a small portion of lean meat, chicken or fish.
- Limit sour cream, creamy sauces and corn chips where possible

Lebanese, Greek or Turkish

- Purchase a small kebab loaded with plenty of vegetables.
- Include extras such as tabouli, hummus, tzatziki and salads.
- Avoid deep-fried zucchini balls and falafels.
- Avoid large kebabs with lots of meat filling and cream-based sauces.

Seafood

- Replace deep fried seafood options with grilled or steamed instead.
- Choose baked potato, salad or vegetables instead of chips or wedges.

Produced by Nutrition Australia ACT Division, October 2016. Reviewed August 2021.