

Eating out

Eating out is an enjoyable part of life, and having diabetes shouldn't stop you from sharing a meal with family and friends.

If you only eat out occasionally, the choices you make are less likely to affect your overall diabetes management than if you eat out regularly. If eating out is a regular part of your life, it's important to try and choose healthy options.



Making healthy food choices

Healthy eating includes choosing from a variety of foods, such as vegetables, wholegrains, fruit, lean meats, fish and low-fat dairy foods. Where possible, try to choose high-fibre, low glycemic index (GI) carbohydrate foods. Low-GI foods are more slowly digested and absorbed, resulting in a gradual rise in blood glucose levels.

It's also important to limit foods that are high in saturated fat, added sugars and salt (sodium). A dietitian can help you with information on the best food choices when eating out.

Dining at a restaurant

Many restaurants serve food that easily fits into a healthy eating plan. Some restaurants have menus online so you can see what healthier choices are available. It's a good idea to ask restaurant staff about the dish of your choice and the way it has been cooked. You can then request simple changes if you need to.

Tips for dining out

What to choose

- » Choose clear or vegetable-based soups rather than creamy soups.
- » Order salad or steamed vegetables as a side dish.
- » Choose olive oil or vinegar-based dressings for salads.

- » Ask for an entrée-size meal as a main dish.
- » Look for grilled, stir-fried, braised or barbequed dishes with lean meats and plenty of vegetables.
- » Choose dishes with lean cuts of meat, seafood or skinless chicken.
- » Choose the entrée size for pasta dishes and risotto, and opt for a tomato or vegetable-based sauce.
- » Have fresh fruit salad or sorbet instead of rich desserts.
- » Choose plain, mineral, soda water or diet soft drinks.

What to avoid

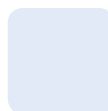
- » Avoid dishes described as creamy, battered, crispy or fried.
- » If choosing from a buffet, try not to over-eat – limit how often you go back for more.
- » Limit salads that contain creamy dressings or high-fat extras like croutons, cheese or deli meats.
- » Be careful with sauces, dressings and condiments – ask for them to be served on the side and only use small amounts.

- » When eating Asian or Indian-style meals, limit creamy curries and take care with your serving size of rice, noodles and flat breads.
- » Avoid salty foods and don't add extra salt to your meal.
- » Beware of extras, such as bread and butter, chips with the meal, and chocolates with coffee.
- » Ask for a small serving of dessert or share one.
- » If you drink alcohol, limit this to two standard drinks. A standard drink is equivalent to 285mls of regular beer, 425mls of low-alcohol beer, 100mls of wine, and 60mls of fortified wine or 30mls of spirits. If drinking alcohol it's best to have it with a meal that contains carbohydrate, such as pasta, rice, potato, sweet potato or bread.

Takeaway foods

Nutrition information is available at major fast food chains. Kilojoule (energy) content is usually displayed in-store and more detailed nutrition information is available online. Look for options with the lowest kilojoules.

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Tips for choosing takeaways

Hamburgers

- » Choose a wholegrain or wholemeal roll if available.
- » Ask for no butter, margarine, creamy sauces or mayonnaise on the roll.
- » Ask for extra salad.
- » Avoid burgers with 'the works/the lot' and extras like bacon, egg and cheese.
- » Choose lean meat, chicken, fish or a vegetable patty.

Pizza

- » Ask for a thin and crispy base instead of a thick, pan-fried pizza base.
- » Choose healthy toppings like mushrooms, pineapple, capsicum, onion, eggplant, tomato and seafood.
- » Limit toppings high in saturated fat and salt like salami, pepperoni and extra cheese.
- » Avoid 'meat lovers' pizzas and stuffed crusts.

Chicken

- » Choose barbecued or grilled chicken rather than crumbed or fried.
- » Remove the skin and limit the gravy.
- » Choose salads or vegetables instead of chips. Look for olive oil or vinegar-based dressings.

Fish & chips

- » Ask for fish or seafood to be grilled (not fried).
- » Choose thick/straight-cut chips or wedges instead of French fries and

ask for a small serve.

- » Add a serve of garden salad if available.
- » Ask for no salt to be added.

Sandwiches

- » Choose dense grainy/seeded or sourdough bread without butter.
- » Try hummus or avocado as a spread.
- » Choose low-fat fillings like lean skinless turkey/chicken, tuna or salmon, baked beans, boiled egg, cottage/ricotta cheese.
- » Add lots of salad.

Drinks

- » Choose plain, sparkling or soda water.
- » If you drink soft drink, choose diet varieties.
- » Limit fruit juice and choose only small serves of 100% juice.
- » Limit flavoured milk, smoothies or milkshakes. If you choose these try to avoid large serves.

Meals with family and friends

If you are invited to eat with family and friends at their home, offer to bring a healthy dish to share.

Special occasions – such as birthdays and other celebrations – should be enjoyed. You don't need to miss out on special occasion foods – just ask for a smaller serve. If you drink alcohol, avoid drinking excessive amounts.

If you use insulin, ask your host what kind of meal they will be serving so you can bring additional carbohydrate foods if needed.

The NDSS and you

The NDSS provides a range of services to help you manage your diabetes. These include our Infoline and website for advice on diabetes management, NDSS products and a range of support programs to help you learn more about managing your diabetes.

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