

Total Nutrition

Ten Questions To Ask In A Restaurant

by *Mindy Hermann, R.D.*

(NAPSA)—Most of us love eating out. According to a 2006 survey by the Food Marketing Institute and Prevention magazine, most people believe that the food they eat at home is healthier than foods eaten out. What can you do to make your restaurant meals healthier? Hope Warshaw, R.D., author of “Eat Out, Eat Right!”



Mindy Hermann

and “What to Eat When You’re Eating Out,” suggests asking these questions:

1. Do you have an à la carte menu instead of the buffet? All-you-can-eat buffets, meal deals, supersizing and other specials are surefire traps to overeat.

2. How is the dish prepared? Look for foods prepared by baking, broiling, braising, grilling or other ways that don’t add extra fat.

3. Can I order an appetizer-size or half-size entrée? Restaurant entrée portions tend to be much larger than portions you serve at home. If the restaurant will not serve a smaller portion, set aside half to bring home.

4. Can I split a dish with someone at my table? Many restaurants will divide menu items in the kitchen. And remember to always share desserts.

5. Could you give me a larger portion of vegetables and a smaller portion of the main dish? The kitchen may be willing to make the swap without an extra charge.

6. What can I substitute? Does the restaurant offer a vegetable side dish, baked potato, veg-

etable or fruit salad instead of French fries, potato chips or potato salad? Can a sandwich be prepared on whole wheat bread instead of a croissant or oversized wrap?

7. Could you leave off the _____ (sour cream, cheese sauce, dressing, mayonnaise, etc.)? Find out whether lower-fat condiments like balsamic vinegar, salsa and lower-fat dressing are available.

8. Can you make this dish with sliced chicken breast? Many classic chicken dishes in Chinese restaurants are prepared with breaded, fried chicken chunks. A restaurant may be willing to substitute chicken breast for a small extra charge.

9. Which dishes do you recommend for vegetarians? Ask about all ingredients; some meatless dishes may be prepared with animal products like chicken broth.

10. Do you have nutrition information on any of your dishes? Nutrition information is available in most fast food and some casual dining restaurants.

Ask Mindy

Q: If I have to eat out a lot, what can I do to make sure my diet is healthy?

A: Start off the day with a nutrient-rich breakfast like Whole Grain Total® with skim or low-fat milk and fruit. Include vegetables and/or fruits at lunch and dinner. Keep cut-up fruits and vegetables in the office refrigerator for a healthy snack.

Mindy Hermann, M.B.A., R.D., is a nutrition writer for women’s, health and fitness magazines. She is the co-author of “Change One” and the American Medical Association’s “Family Health Cookbook.”