

Eating out

Eating out is an enjoyable part of life and having diabetes doesn'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. 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 and poultry, fish, legumes, eggs 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 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

- » Clear or vegetable-based soups rather than creamy soups
- » Extra salad or steamed vegetables as a side dish
- » Olive oil or vinegar-based rather than creamy dressings for salads

- » An entrée-size meal as a main dish
- » Grilled, stir-fried, braised or barbequed dishes with lean meats and plenty of vegetables
- » Dishes with lean cuts of meat, seafood or skinless chicken
- » Vegetarian dishes made with legumes or tofu
- » Entrée sizes for pasta dishes and risotto, tomato or vegetable-based sauces
- » Fresh fruit salad or sorbet instead of rich desserts
- » A small serving of dessert or share one between people
- » Plain, mineral or soda water.
- » Creamy curries and large servings of rice, noodles and flat breads when eating Asian or Indian-style meals.
- » Salty foods and adding extra salt to your meal.
- » Extras, such as bread and butter, chips with the meal, and chocolates with coffee.
- » If you drink alcohol, limit this to no more than two standard drinks. A standard drink is equivalent to 285ml of regular beer, 425ml of low-alcohol beer, 100ml of wine, and 60ml of fortified wine or 30ml of spirits. Refer to the diabetes and alcohol NDSS fact sheet for further information.

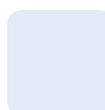
What to avoid

- » Dishes described as creamy, battered, crispy or fried.
- » Overeating, particularly if choosing from a buffet limit how often you go back for more.
- » Salads that contain creamy dressings or high-fat extras like croutons, cheese or deli meats.
- » Too many sauces, dressings and condiments ask for them to be served on the side and only use small amounts.

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.

Many restaurants serve food that easily fits into a healthy eating plan.



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 legume-based 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.
- » Try hummus or avocado as a spread rather than butter. Choose low-fat fillings like lean skinless turkey or chicken, tuna or salmon, baked beans, boiled egg or cottage or ricotta cheese and avoid processed meats.
- » Add lots of salad.

Drinks

- » Choose plain, sparkling mineral 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, order a small serve.

The NDSS and you

A wide range of services and support is available through the NDSS to help you manage your diabetes. This includes information on diabetes management through the NDSS Helpline and website. The products, services and education programs available can help you stay on top of your diabetes.

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