Healthy Eating Out

Eating out is common and can be a challenge when trying to make healthy choices. Trying to stick to the *Oklahoma Pick Your Plate Method* at a restaurant may seem impossible. With a little bit of pre-planning, eating out can be healthy.

Follow these steps to make healthier choices
at all types of restaurants.

Before going to the restaurant:

- Pick restaurants where it's easier to make healthy choices.
- Go online, check an app, or call ahead to find out what healthy choices are available.
- Decide what to order before arriving.
- Don't go into a restaurant overly hungry.

What restaurants have healthy choices I enjoy?

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Before ordering:

- Drink a glass of water.
- If I am really hungry, order a side salad before choosing my entree.
- When free bread or chips are offered, ask the server to only bring how much I need. "*Only bring us 2 breadsticks, please.*"
- Ask the server about healthier options.
- Avoid drinking alcohol.
  - A 12 oz. margarita has around 552 calories.
  - Alcohol can make muscles (even stomach muscles) relax and expand, causing me to eat more.
  - Drinking alcohol may lead to making unhealthy food choices.

When ordering:

- Be the first person at the table to order.
- Don't be afraid to ask for modifications. Ordering can be made healthier to fit my needs. Be firm but polite.
  - May I have my meat grilled instead of fried?
  - What other vegetables do you have on the menu?
  - May I have milk for my coffee instead of creamer?
  - Can you bring a to-go box now before my meal comes?
  - May I have vegetables instead of rice and beans?
  - Please put the salad dressing/gravy/butter on the side.
  - Instead of french fries can I get a side salad?
  - Do you offer steamed vegetables, instead of mashed potatoes as a side?
  - What kind of low-fat salad dressings do you offer?
  - I would like my salad with no croutons.
  - Could I have half the cheese on one side of the pizza?
  - Is there a lunch portion available?
  - I would like to share a meal. Could you bring an extra plate?

What can I ask to be modified next time I go out to eat?

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While eating:

- Put half of my food in a to-go container before I start eating. It won't be as tempting to eat more food, if it's not visible.
- As soon as I am done, have food removed from the table.
- Trim the visible fat off of meat and take the skin off of chicken.
- Be aware of every bite.
- Put my fork down and socialize during the meal.
- Don't force myself to eat everything on my plate.

Stay aware of my actions and reactions while eating.