



American
Heart
Association

American
Stroke
Association®

life is why™

Tips for Eating Out



Healthy Eating Away from Home

You can make healthy choices when you eat out. Many restaurants offer tasty meals that are low in saturated fat, *trans* fat, sodium and added sugars.



A diet high in saturated and *trans* fats raises the level of cholesterol in the blood. Eating too much sodium can increase blood pressure in some people. And, added sugars provide no nutrients but added calories

that can lead to weight gain, or even obesity. Having high cholesterol, high blood pressure and/or being overweight or obese all increase your risk for heart disease and stroke.

Eating healthier is why we've created this booklet to help you make better choices when eating out—no matter what type of food you choose.

Choosing a Restaurant

When you choose a restaurant, keep the following things in mind. Will the restaurant:

- Take special food preparation requests?
- Prepare food without MSG, salt or other high sodium ingredients?
- Serve dressings and sauces on the side?
- Serve soft margarine (0 g *trans* fat), not butter, with the meal?
- Serve low-fat dairy products such as 1% or skim milk?
- Prepare dishes using vegetable oil (canola, olive, peanut, corn, soybean, sunflower, safflower) or soft margarine made with vegetable oil?
- Remove skin from poultry and trim visible fat from all meats before cooking?
- Broil, grill, bake, steam or poach rather than fry foods?
- Leave all butter, gravy or sauces off entrées and side dishes?
- Serve fresh fruit and fruit-based desserts?

Don't be shy. Ask for what you want! Most foods on the menu can fit into a heart-healthy eating plan if prepared in a healthier manner. If your food isn't prepared as you asked, send it back.

When Ordering

Avoid foods that are fried, au gratin, crispy, scalloped, pan-fried or stuffed. They're high in unhealthy fats and calories. Instead, look for foods that are steamed, broiled, baked, grilled, poached, roasted or sautéed in healthier oils. Ask your server how a dish is prepared. Many restaurants will prepare foods to order, even if what you want isn't on the menu. To find out for sure, call before you go.

Mind Portion Sizes

To keep from overeating, ask for smaller portions. You can also split an appetizer, entrée or dessert with a friend. Or, ask for a take-home box. If you're ordering food to go, avoid eating from the container or package. Instead, serve the food in a small bowl or plate to help control the amount you eat.

Choose Healthier Fats

Ask that your meal be prepared with non-tropical vegetable oil (made from canola, olive, corn, soy, sunflower or safflower) or soft margarine instead of butter.

Avoid Excess Salt

High-sodium foods include those that are pickled, smoked or served with salty sauces such as cocktail sauce, au jus, gravy or other salty broths, and soy or teriyaki sauce. Limit these items. Ask that your food be prepared without added salt or MSG.

Family Style Restaurants and Fast Food

Family Style

Mid-priced “family style” restaurants tend to feature a wide variety of classic American fare.

TIPS: Avoid dishes with lots of cheese, sour cream and creamy dressings. Choose boiled, baked or grilled fish or chicken, instead of fried. Choose whole-grain bread or pita pockets instead of croissants. Salads often make great healthy meals, but be careful of the dressings. They can be high in calories, saturated fat and sodium.

Instead of	Try
Cream soups	Low-sodium broth-based soups with lots of vegetables
Quiche and salad	Low-sodium broth-based soup and salad
Buffalo chicken wings	Peel-and-eat shrimp
Fried chicken sandwich	Grilled chicken sandwich on a whole grain bread
Chicken fried steak	Grilled veggie burger
French fries or potatoes and gravy	Baked potato, potatoes without gravy, brown rice without gravy, or cooked greens made without salt, pork or lard
Creamy coleslaw	Steamed vegetables or tossed salad
Hot fudge sundae	Low-fat frozen yogurt or ice cream, fresh fruit

Fast Food

At fast food restaurants, look for salads, grilled chicken sandwiches and fruit parfaits made with low-fat frozen yogurt.

TIPS: Avoid burgers topped with cheese, creamy sauces and bacon. Steer clear of fried fish sandwiches. Onions, lettuce and tomatoes add flavor without the fat. Order low-fat sour cream instead of butter or cheese on a baked potato.

Instead of	Try
Danish	Small whole-grain bagel
Jumbo cheeseburgers	Grilled chicken or a 2 oz burger with lettuce, tomato and onion
Fried chicken or tacos	Grilled chicken or salad bar (avoid high-calorie toppings and dressings)
Fried chicken pieces	Chicken fajita pitas
French fries	Baked potato with vegetables or low-fat sour cream
Potato chips	Unsalted pretzels, baked potato chips
Milkshake	Water, 100% juice, low-fat milk or small diet soda

Steakhouses and Vegetarian/Health Food Restaurants

Steakhouses

Eating steak on a heart-healthy diet? You can, as long as you chose lean cuts and keep portion sizes small.

TIPS: Don't order king-sized cuts. About 3 ounces of a thinly sliced cut is perfect. Ask to have all visible fat trimmed before the meat is cooked. Many steakhouses prepare seafood too. So, look for fish on the menu as well.

Instead of	Try
Fatty cuts of meat, such as rib eye, porterhouse or T-bone	Leaner cuts of meat, such as London broil, top sirloin, round or flank steak, sirloin tip or tenderloin
French fried, au gratin or scalloped potatoes	Baked potato or brown rice
Caesar or marinated salad	Green salad with low-sodium, low-fat dressing on the side
Fried vegetables	Steamed vegetables
Pie and ice cream	Angel food cake, sherbet or fresh fruit

Vegetarian/Health Food

Health food and vegetarian food often taste fresh and flavorful. Some health food restaurants use chicken or fish to provide healthy protein. With vegetarian food, most protein comes from eggs, plants (legumes, beans or nuts), or dairy products. But watch out for vegetarian recipes that contain full-fat cheeses. They may be high in saturated fat.



TIPS: There are lots of great vegetarian options. Choose those that include low-fat dairy products or plant-based proteins.

Instead of	Try
Bran muffin	Fresh fruit or low-fat yogurt parfait
Salads with creamy dressing	Salads with vinaigrette on the side
Sandwich fillings with mayonnaise	Sandwich fillings with low-fat yogurt or vinegar
Cheese quiche	Whole grain wrap with vegetables or beans

Ethnic Foods

Chinese

Chinese food is one of America's most popular ethnic cuisines, but can be high in sodium. Main dish portions are

often quite large and some items are deep fried. Order fewer entrées than the number in your dinner party. Then share and enjoy!

TIPS: Choose entrées with lots of vegetables. Chop suey with steamed brown rice is an example. Substitute chicken for beef. Skip the crispy fried noodles on the table. Ask the restaurant for steamed or baked dishes instead of deep-fried menu items. Order foods prepared without soy sauce, MSG and salt.



Instead of	Try
Egg rolls or fried wontons	Steamed vegetarian dumplings
Fried entrées	Boiled, broiled, steamed or lightly stir-fried entrées
Dishes with fried meats	Dishes with lots of vegetables
Fried rice	Steamed brown rice

Vietnamese

Vietnamese food is one of the world's oldest and most superb cuisines. Its subtle flavors and textures blend the Far East with French cooking for a marvelous dining experience.



Instead of	Try
Banh michien voitom (fried shrimp toast)	Low-sodium canh chua tom (spicy and sour shrimp soup)
Cha gio (fried spring rolls)	Goi cuon (fresh spring roll)
Vit quay (roast duck)	Bo xa lui nuong (grilled beef with lemon grass in rice paper with vegetables)
Heo xao chua ngot (sweet and sour pork)	Ca hap (steamed whole fish)
Ca-ri ga (curry chicken)	Ca kho to (fish steamed with caramel sauce in clay pot)
Banh dua ca ra men (coconut flan with caramel)	Lychee (fruit in syrup)

French

French food used to mean high in saturated fat, with butter as a staple ingredient. “Nouvelle cuisine” has introduced a new, lighter way of cooking with French flair.



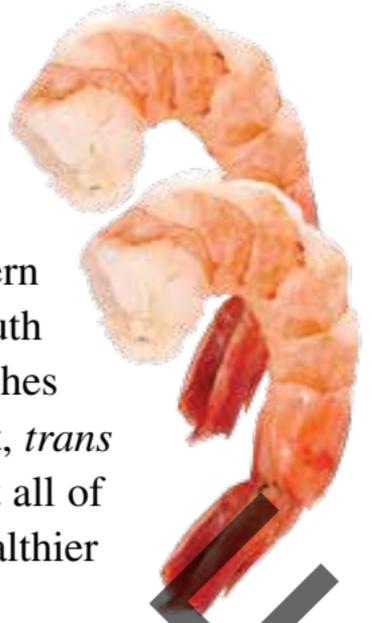
TIPS: Skip the rich entrées, desserts and sauces. Choose simple dishes with sauces on the side. Ask that soft margarine or vegetable oil be used for cooking instead of butter.

Instead of	Try
Appetizers with olives, capers or anchovies	Less salty appetizers, such as steamed mussels or salad
Paté	Steamed mussels
French onion soup	Mixed green salad with vinaigrette dressing
Croissants	Whole grain French bread
Rich, heavy entrées	Lighter nouvelle cuisine
Hollandaise or Mornay sauce	Bordelaise sauce (without butter)
Bechamel or Bearnaise sauce	Wine-based sauce
Creamy “au gratin” potato dishes	Lightly steamed vegetables
Chocolate mousse	Flambéed cherries
Crepe caramel	Peaches in wine

Cajun

Cajun cuisine is a spicy fare. It originated in southern France but took hold in south Louisiana. Many Cajun dishes can be high in saturated fat, *trans* fat and sodium. But almost all of them can be made with healthier ingredients.

TIPS: Avoid fried seafood and hush puppies. Blackened entrées are usually dipped in butter or oil, covered with spices and pan-fried. Ask the cook to grill your dish instead. Ask for all sauces and gravies on the side.



Instead of	Try
Fried crawfish or shrimp	Boiled crawfish or shrimp
Gumbo, étouffée and sauces made with roux	Creole and jambalaya dishes (without butter and sausage)
Fried seafood	Boiled or grilled seafood
Fried shrimp or oyster Po' Boy sandwiches	Turkey Po' Boy sandwich
Dirty rice (contains chicken gizzards, livers, butter, etc.)	Brown rice
Red beans and rice with sausage	Red beans and rice without sausage



Greek and Middle Eastern

Many Greek and Middle Eastern dishes are prepared with olive oil, which is one of the healthier cooking oils.

TIPS: Ask that high-sodium foods like feta cheese and olives be served on the side. Request salad dressing and sauces on the side, too. Phyllo pastry dishes can be high in saturated fat, so scan the menu for healthier options.

Instead of	Try
Meat-stuffed appetizers	Vegetable appetizers
Fried calamari	Dolmas (rice mixture wrapped in grape leaves)
Saganaki (fried cheese)	Melitzanosalata (eggplant appetizer)
Moussaka (lamb and beef casserole) and other creamy or cheesy entrées	Roast chicken, shish kabob, couscous or bulgur wheat with vegetables
Gyro	Chicken pita sandwich
Spanakopita (spinach pie with egg and cheese)	Plaki (fish cooked in tomatoes, onions and garlic)
Pastries like baklava	Fruit



SAMPLE

Italian

To most people, Italian food means pasta. Whole-grain pasta is a good choice when available. Full-fat cheeses and cream sauces add saturated fat, salt (sodium) and calories. So ask for fettuccine with low-sodium marinara sauce. That's amore!

TIPS: Share dishes among your dinner companions. Ask your server to hold the cheese and bacon. If you order pizza, choose toppings such as spinach, mushrooms, broccoli and roasted peppers. This will keep down the saturated fat and sodium and add up the vegetables.

Instead of	Try
Fried calamari	Roasted peppers or minestrone soup
Cheese or meat-filled pastas or casserole-type dishes	Pasta primavera (with garden vegetables) or pasta with low-sodium marinara sauce
Pasta with butter or cream sauces (such as Alfredo sauce)	Pasta with marsala sauce (made with wine) or marinara sauce (made with fresh or low sodium canned tomatoes, onions and garlic)
Any scallopine or parmigiana (floured, fried and baked with cheese) dish	Marsala and piccata dishes
Italian pastries such as cream cake	Italian ices

Indian

Indian food includes lots of high-fiber grains and less animal protein. Legumes (beans and peas) and vegetables are often used. But watch for foods prepared with ghee (clarified butter), or foods that are fried. Coconut oil and coconut milk are also often used in Indian cooking, but they're high in saturated fat.

TIPS: Start with salads or low-fat yogurt with chopped or shredded vegetables. Choose chicken or seafood rather than beef or lamb. Look for dishes prepared without ghee. When dining with a group, order a variety of vegetable dishes to share. To lower sodium intake, skip the soups.



Instead of	Try
Samosas (stuffed and fried vegetable turnover)	Papadum or papad (crispy, thin lentil wafers)
Korma (braised meat with a rich yogurt cream sauce)	<p>Chicken or beef tikka (roasted in an oven with mild spices) or chicken or beef tandoori (marinated in spices and baked in a tandoor, or clay oven).</p> <p>(In either case, ask if they will baste with soft margarine or vegetable oil instead of butter, palm oil, palm kernel oil or coconut oil.)</p>
Curries made with coconut milk or cream	Curries with a vegetable or dal base, shish kabob, or tandoori chicken or fish
Pakora (deep-fried dough with vegetables)	Gobhi matar tamatar (cauliflower with peas and tomatoes)
Saaq paneer (spinach with cheese cubes and cream sauce)	Matar pulao (rice pilaf with peas)
Sauced rice dishes	Fragrant steamed brown rice
Fried or stuffed breads	Chapati (thin, dry, whole-wheat bread) or naan (leavened, baked bread topped with poppy seeds)



SAMPLE

Japanese

Japanese cuisine often features rice and vegetables. Portions are often kept small.

TIPS: Ask the restaurant to prepare your food without high-sodium marinades, sauces and salt. And ask that sauces be served on the side. Avoid foods that are deep-fried, battered or breaded.

Instead of	Try
Vegetable tempura (lightly battered and fried vegetables served with sauce)	Steamed vegetables
Shrimp tempura	Grilled shrimp or vegetable sushi
Tonkatsu (breaded pork cutlet)	Nabemono (casseroles), yosenabe (seafood and vegetables in broth), shabu shabu (sliced beef and noodles cooked and served at the table with dipping sauce), sukiyaki (beef and vegetables cooked in sauce), su udon (hot noodles and low-sodium broth)
Oyako domburi (chicken omelet over rice)	Sumashi wan (low-sodium clear soup with tofu and shrimp)
Chawan mushi (chicken and shrimp in egg custard)	Chicken or beef teriyaki (grilled)

Mexican

When you know what to choose, Mexican food can be fresh, tasty and healthful. Some Mexican food is fried with lard and topped with cheese. These foods can be loaded with saturated fat and calories. It can be high in sodium, too.

TIPS: Ask your server not to bring fried tortilla chips to the table. Request fat-free or low-fat sour cream. Or use salsa to add flavor. Veracruz or other tomato-based sauces are better than cream or cheese sauces. If you order a taco salad, don't eat the fried shell.



Instead of	Try
Flour tortillas (contain lard)	Corn tortillas (soft or baked)
Nachos	Grilled shrimp
Carnitas (fried beef or pork) or chorizo (sausage)	Grilled fish or chicken breast
Refried beans	Frijoles a la charra or borracho beans and Spanish rice
Full-fat sour cream and cheese	Salsa, pico de gallo, cilantro or jalapeño peppers
Guacamole	Chopped avocado or salsa
Quesadillas (flour or corn tortilla, filled with meat and cheese, then fried)	Chicken fajitas (marinated chicken grilled with onions and green peppers, served with lettuce, diced tomatoes and a soft corn tortilla)
Chalupas and tacos	Taco salad or fajita salad (Don't eat the tortilla shell, and ask for low-fat sour cream)
Flautas (crisp, rolled tortillas stuffed with shredded meat and topped with a sauce), chimichangas (flour tortillas filled with spicy meat and Monterey Jack cheese, fried and topped with tomato sauce), or burritos (large flour tortillas filled with beans or meat, served with tomato sauce and topped with shredded cheese)	Chicken or beef enchiladas with red sauce or salsa

Thai

Thai food is a wonderful blend of fresh and spicy ingredients. It tends to be light on fats, meats and sauces, and relies more on vegetables, noodles and rice. It's no mystery why it's so popular.

TIPS: Aim for lighter, stir-fried dishes and fresh spring rolls. Steer clear of heavy sauces and deep-fried entrées. Ask that cooking be done with vegetable oil, rather than coconut oil or lard. Choose chicken and seafood meals over those made with meat.



Limit dishes with coconut milk and cream, which is high in saturated fat. Avoid soy and other sauces if you're watching your sodium intake. Ask that MSG not be used. And share portions with your dining companions.

Instead of	Try
Fried spring rolls (rolls filled with vegetables, served with sweet and sour sauce)	Fresh spring rolls
Dishes with coconut milk	Stir-fried dishes
Tom ka gai (chicken in coconut milk soup with mushrooms and lime juice)	Low-sodium Tom yam goong (hot and sour shrimp soup)
Gai pad med ma-muang himapan (cashew chicken)	Kanaa namman hoi (stir-fried broccoli with low-sodium oyster sauce)
Gaeng keow wan gai (curry chicken with eggplant)	Nuea pad prik (pepper steak)
Gaeng ped gai (red curry chicken)	Pad Thai (noodles stir-fried with ground peanuts, bean sprouts, egg, tofu and scallions, topped with shrimp)
Fried rice	Steamed brown rice
Gluay kaeg (banana slices dipped in coconut batter and fried)	Khao newo kaew (sweet sticky rice)
Coconut ice cream	Fruit ice

More **Tips**

Dinner is not the only meal you may eat away from home. These tips can help you choose healthier breakfasts and prepared take-out foods.

Breakfast

Breakfast menus can be loaded with foods high in saturated fat, such as bacon and sausage. Commercially baked goods (pastries, muffins and doughnuts) are high in saturated fat, *trans* fat and sugar. For a healthy, filling breakfast, consider:

- Fresh fruit
- 100% fruit juice
- Whole-grain English muffin with a little jelly, jam or soft margarine
- Whole-grain toast with honey or jam
- Bagel with a little jam or low-fat cream cheese
- Whole-grain cereals with low-fat (1%) milk
- Whole-grain waffle with fresh fruit
- Low-fat yogurt (no added sugars)
- Omelet or scrambled eggs with chopped vegetables
- Low-fat, low-sodium cottage cheese (great on toast with jam)
- Hot cereals such as oatmeal, grits, cream of wheat or cream of rice

Prepared Foods

It's a challenge to eat tasty, nutritious meals on the go. Many grocery and specialty stores offer ready-to-eat entrées you can take with you.

The same tips for restaurant foods apply to prepared take-out foods. Here are some good choices for side dishes to add to your prepared entrées:

- Salad with low-fat, low-sodium dressing
- Fresh raw or cooked vegetables
- Whole-grain bread or rolls
- Fruit for dessert



Bon **Appetit!**

We hope these menu suggestions are helpful. They're just a sample to get you started. Plenty of other healthy and delicious restaurant choices are out there. Use these tips when eating out to find foods low in saturated and *trans* fats, sodium and added sugars.

Use your best judgment. Don't be afraid to ask your server questions about how foods are prepared. Heart-healthy eating doesn't mean you have to give up tasty foods. So savor the flavors!



For **More Information**

We want people to experience more of life's precious moments. It's why we've made better heart and brain health our mission.

*Life is why*TM we have created many educational booklets like this to help you and your family make healthier choices to reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke, manage disease or care for a loved one.

Everyone has a reason to live a longer, healthier life. **What's the "why" in your life?**

Whatever your why, we encourage you to write it down here. Look back at your "why" often, and use it to inspire you as you work to live a longer, healthier life.

_____ is why.

To learn more, call us toll-free at **1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721)** or contact your nearest American Heart Association office. You can also visit our Web site, **heart.org**.

For information on stroke, call **1-888-4-STROKE (1-888-478-7653)** or visit us online at **strokeassociation.org**.

Heart Attack Warning Signs

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense, but most of them start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. Here are some of the signs that can mean a heart attack is happening.

- **Chest discomfort.** Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body.** Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- **Shortness of breath.** This may occur with or without chest discomfort.
- **Other signs.** These may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.

As with men, women's most common heart attack symptom is chest pain or discomfort. But women are somewhat more likely than men to experience some of the other common symptoms, particularly shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting and back or jaw pain.

Stroke Warning Signs

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, or trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness or loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause

F.A.S.T. is an easy way to remember how to recognize a stroke and what to do. Spot a stroke **FAST**. **F**ace drooping. **A**rm weakness. **S**peech difficulty. **T**ime to call 9-1-1.

Dial 9-1-1 Fast

Heart attack and stroke are life-or-death emergencies—every second counts. If you suspect you or someone you are with has any of the symptoms of heart attack or stroke, **immediately call 9-1-1 or your emergency response number** so an ambulance can be sent. **Don't delay—get help right away!**

For a stroke, also note the time when the first symptom(s) appeared. If given within three hours of the start of symptoms, a clot-busting drug may improve the chances of getting better faster.

Cut along dotted line and keep



For heart- or risk-related information,
call the American Heart Association at
1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721)
or visit us online at heart.org.

For stroke information, call our American Stroke
Association at **1-888-4-STROKE (1-888-478-7653)** or visit
strokeassociation.org. For information on life after stroke,
call and ask for the Stroke Family Support Network.

The statistics in this brochure were up to date at publication.
For the latest statistics, see the Heart Disease and
Stroke Statistics Update at heart.org/statistics.



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