

# Healthy Choices When Eating Out

LEADER'S GUIDE

**K-STATE**  
Research and Extension  
Family Consumer Sciences

## Educational goals

*Healthy Choices When Eating Out*, MF2770, will enable participants to:

- Learn strategies and tips to make healthful food choices when eating out.
- Identify food preparation methods that support healthier food choices.
- Practice making healthy food choices.

## Intended audiences

- Community groups, including Family Community Education (FCE)
- Older youth and college students
- Consumer or weight-management study groups
- Individual study

## Suggested teaching activities

- Make a visual aid to show the amount of sugar in soft drinks. Use a clean, dry plastic soft-drink bottle. Put the amount of sugar in the bottle that would be in the soft drink (4 grams of sugar equal 1 teaspoon). A 20-ounce bottle is usually about 250 calories, with 70 grams of sugar: 17½ teaspoons. Remember to point out that, according to the nutrition label, this bottle is 2.5 servings. You may also want to be aware of the sodium content in selected beverage choices.
- Ask each participant to name a favorite restaurant meal. Discuss its healthful components and how it could be prepared with lower fat, fewer calories and/or more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.



## Suggested introduction ideas

Introduce the session with one or more of the following questions and ideas from the paragraph below:

- How many of you have eaten away from home this week?
- Do you choose foods as carefully when you eat away from home as when you eat at home?
- Do you think that eating away from home can be as healthy as eating at home?

It is often difficult to make healthy choices when eating away from home. Most consumers eat out frequently, and food is available almost anywhere, anytime today. It is tempting to overeat and to eat less healthful foods. We will discuss some strategies today that you can use to help you enjoy lower fat and lower calorie meals when eating away from home.

## Suggested program preparation

1. Review this leader's guide and the fact sheet *Healthy Choices When Eating Out*, MF2770.
2. Review additional resources identified in fact sheet and leader's guide.
3. Review the MyPlate food guidance system and understand the food groups and suggested serving amounts.

- Use the questions at the end of this guide for group discussion. For some, there is no definite right or wrong answer, but the questions can be used as discussion points.
- Do the “What is your healthy choice?” activity on the last page of the fact sheet.

## Suggested community activities

1. Talk to restaurant managers to encourage them to offer a variety of healthier food choices that include items that are lower in fat, sodium, and added sugar and increase options for fruits and vegetables.
2. When your community service group handles concessions at an event or serves a meal, plan to offer healthful choices.
3. Visit with members of the wellness policy committee at your school district, local food policy councils, and community coalitions. Is there some way you can help support their efforts?

## Discussion questions

After the lesson, ask participants for responses to the following questions. Ask them if their responses are different than they would have been before the presentation.

1. Restaurants usually serve a standard (according to MyPlate) food portion.
2. It is best to “save up” before going to a restaurant so you can eat all you want.
3. Sharing a meal can be a good idea.
4. Restaurants have a set preparation method for each food and cannot vary from that.
5. Beans and whole-grain breads are good choices to add fiber.
6. What are best choices for eating fruits and vegetables when dining out?
7. Low-calorie salad dressings and low-fat milk choices are ways to reduce calories in restaurant meals.
8. A regular baked potato is usually equal to the recommended ½ cup vegetable serving.
9. Research shows that the more you eat out, the more likely you are to consume excess calories, fats, sugar, and sodium.
10. Dining out or eating foods prepared away from home can be a healthy and enjoyable experience.

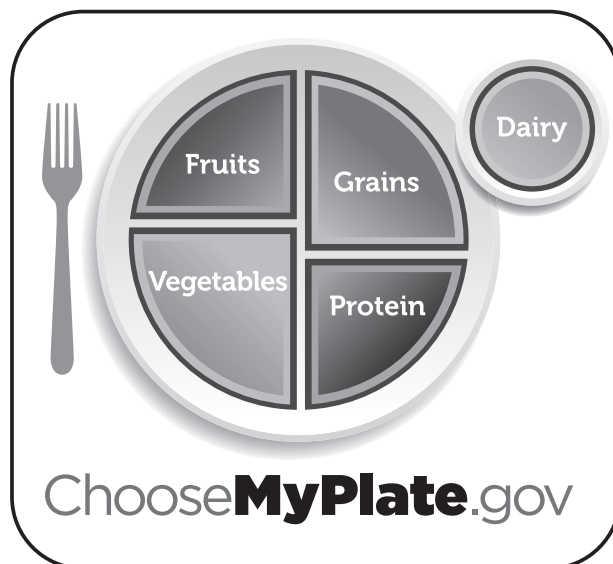
## Helpful websites

Most chain restaurants have websites, and a few are listed below. Do a search to find restaurants in your area.

[www.mcdonalds.com](http://www.mcdonalds.com)  
[www.sonicdrivein.com](http://www.sonicdrivein.com)  
[www.applebees.com](http://www.applebees.com)  
[www.chilis.com](http://www.chilis.com)  
<http://www.subway.com>  
<https://www.starbucks.com/>  
[www.papajohnsonline.com](http://www.papajohnsonline.com)  
[www.olivegarden.com](http://www.olivegarden.com)

For more information, try the sites below:

[www.cspinet.org/restaurantreport.pdf](http://www.cspinet.org/restaurantreport.pdf) (p.24)  
<https://www.healthydiningfinder.com/>  
<http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/>



County where program was offered: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

We appreciate your opinions! Please help us make our programs better by taking about 5 minutes to answer the following questions. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you may skip answering one or more questions if you wish. The information that you share will be held in the strictest confidence. We will summarize it in reports, in order to evaluate our program. We greatly value your participation. Thank you!

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. As a result of this program, I improved my knowledge.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. As a result of this program, I plan to make healthier choices when eating out.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. As a result of this program, I can identify food preparation methods that support healthier food choices when eating out.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. As a result of this program, I have also learned:

5. Additional comments:

**Demographics:**

I am an adult:  18-29 years  30-39 years  40-49 years  50-59 years  60-69 years  70+ years

I am a youth:  0-4 years  5-11 years  12-17 years

Gender:  Male  Female

Ethnicity:  American Indian or Alaskan Native  Asian  Black or African American  White

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander  Hispanic  Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino

Prefer not to respond

For office use only: Coded identification number -

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