

# Dining out with diabetes

Diabetes doesn't have to stop you from enjoying life's pleasures. And that includes dining out. You can eat out and still stay on your meal plan. Here are some tips that can help.

## Stay on schedule

If you take diabetes pills or injectable diabetes medicines, timing of your meals may be important. So it's a good idea to plan ahead.

- If you'll be dining with family or friends, ask if they would be willing to eat when you usually eat so you can stay on schedule
- Avoid times that restaurants are usually busy so you won't have to wait. If you're not sure when the busy times are, call ahead and ask
- Make reservations, and arrive promptly. When you call, or when you arrive at the restaurant, consider mentioning that you have diabetes so timing of your meal matters
- Think about looking at the restaurant's menu online. That way you can decide on a healthy choice while still at home and you won't waste time looking at the menu
- Before ordering, ask whether the dish you want will take extra time to prepare
- If you will be eating lunch or dinner later than usual, think about eating a fruit or starch serving from that meal at your usual mealtime

## When it's time to order

Don't just choose the first meal that looks good to you. Think carefully about how the food will fit into your meal plan.

- If you don't know what is in a dish or how it's prepared, ask the server so you can decide whether it fits into your meal plan
- If you're counting carbs, ask about "hidden" carbs, like flour or cornstarch in sauces and soups
- If you're on a low-salt meal plan, ask for your meal without added salt
- Ask for salad dressing, sauces, and gravy to be served on the side. That way you can control how much you use
- If you'll be ordering meat or fish, ask that it be broiled with no extra butter
- Mix and match menu items your way. If it fits your meal plan better, order a salad and soup or an appetizer instead of an entrée
- Don't hesitate to ask for substitutes. For example, if your meal comes with French fries, ask for a vegetable instead
- Consider ordering one meal to share with a fellow diner

