

dining out with cancer

Cancer

Dining out is one of life's simple pleasures, however, enjoying a meal out while dealing with cancer and its treatment has its challenges. To improve your dining out experience, try following the tips below.

BEFORE DINING

Check the Menu Online

- Research the restaurant's online menu before arriving. This can help relieve possible stress associated with dining out.
- Determine if anything on the menu sounds appetizing.
- Look to see if any menu items can easily be altered to fit within your eating plan.

AT THE RESTAURANT

Choose Healthier Menu Items

- Look for menu item descriptors such as 'baked', 'broiled', or 'steamed'. These words indicate the item was prepared with little or no added fat.
- Avoid menu item descriptors such as 'fried', 'extra crispy', 'smothered', or 'creamy'. These words indicate the item was prepared with high amounts of added fat.
- If eating meat, try to choose a lean protein source, such as chicken or fish.
- Load up on colorful produce! Choose a fruit or vegetable side dish to pair with your entrée.

Keep Food Safety in Mind

- Choose restaurants that are clean and willing to cook food to order.
- Avoid eating raw or unpasteurized cheeses. Your server should be able to check if an item has been pasteurized.
- Avoid buffets and salad bars because foods may sit out at uncontrolled temperatures for long periods of time.
- Avoid raw or undercooked fish (sushi, sashimi), shellfish, meats, and poultry.
- Package leftover foods yourself and refrigerate as soon as you arrive home.

Hydrate Your Body

Consider water for your drink of choice. Soft drinks, alcoholic beverages, and sweetened tea all contain high amounts of sugar.

Dine for (a Healthier) You

- Don't be afraid to be assertive. Most restaurants are willing to prepare a meal to meet a customer's needs. Ask the server questions about your order.
 - How is the item prepared?
 - Can the sauce or dressing be served on the side?
 - Can substitutions be made?
 - Can a menu item be thickened or pureed based on your swallowing needs?
 - Will they cook foods to order?