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Success.*

California Diabetes and Pregnancy Program

# Eating Out Wisely

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If you haven't seen a Sweet Success provider yet, the information below may be helpful while you wait for your first visit. This is general information and it does not take the place of medical advice from a doctor, nurse, dietitian, or behavioral medicine specialist.

Dining out may present some difficulties when trying to achieve good blood glucose control. Restaurant foods may be more processed, overcooked, and contain sugar. The portion sizes served at restaurants tend to be much larger than normally needed. A few suggestions to help you avoid the foods that can cause blood sugar to rise too much are listed below.

## **FAST FOOD RESTAURANTS**

Burgers- Eat plain small hamburgers. You may add mayonnaise and mustard but avoid catsup and relish and other sweet sauces that may be used by the fast food establishment. Avoid breaded and deep fried foods such as fried chicken, fish sticks, or breaded meats. If you must eat these foods, remove the bread or batter coating.

Avoid biscuits and croissants at breakfast. English muffin or whole wheat toast are the better choices. Grilled chicken or pita pocket chicken are also good choices.

## **MEXICAN FOOD RESTAURANTS**

Much of Mexican food is starchy so you need to be extra selective when eating in Mexican restaurants. Try to avoid chips while waiting for the meal, a few mouthfuls will use up your starch allowance quickly. Of course, 1 chip with tomato salsa, just for the taste, is fine, but try to hold back. When ordering an entrée, select meals which consist of meat, fish or chicken, and cheese rather than just beans, rice and tortillas. Try to include salad and chili tomato salsa to fill up on rather than eating lots of rice and beans.

Avocado, sour cream and olives are fine to include. These foods will not raise your blood glucose level but they do add a substantial amount of fat calories. Suggested selections in Mexican restaurants are carne asada-charbroiled beef or meat and vegetable fajitas. Eat 1 or 2 plain corn tortillas for starch.

## **ASIAN RESTAURANTS**

**CHINESE** - Chinese food can have some hidden starches and sugar. You can find sugar in sweet and sour sauces, cornstarch in meat and vegetable dishes, and soups. The obvious starches, steamed rice and noodles, need to be measured. Chinese pancakes and steamed wonton noodle must be included in your starch allowance. Fried rice, fried noodles and deep fried batter coated foods are the starches to avoid.

Pork buns and barbecued pork ribs should also be avoided. Select steamed fish or stir fried vegetable dishes. Leave any suspicious sauces on your plate. Avoid sweet and sour dishes and fried foods such as egg rolls, fried prawns or fried won tons. Have a fresh orange for dessert, if you are allowed a fruit exchange with your meal. One fortune cookie can substitute for ½ a starch. Use plain tea in moderation. Ask for extra hot water so that you can dilute the tea if it is too strong.

Sauces to avoid are: Oyster sauce, plum sauce, and sweet and sour.

**JAPANESE FOOD** - Avoid teriyaki sauces, tempura, and sweetened rice dishes. The vinegar used in making sushi is often sweetened.

### **ITALIAN FOOD**

Avoid red tomato sauces which contain sugar. Select linguine with a light olive oil and garlic sauce or pesto instead. Of course you do not want to eat too much pasta. Try to remember the allowed portion for noodles (usually 1 to 1/1/2 cup). Avoid adding french bread when eating pasta dishes. Add salad to complete the meal. Eat a big salad when going out for pizza and only eat 1-2 small slices or 1 large slice of pizza at most. If you are still hungry, eat some extra cheese and vegetable topping from another slice of pizza, but leave the crust. Use an oil and vinegar salad dressing for your salad. Avoid creamy salad dressings as they often contain starch as a thickening agent or sugar. Drink water or a diet beverage. Avoid sweetened beverages and alcohol. Note: In some restaurants, tomato sauces may be made without sugar. These are fine to use.

### **CONTINENTAL FOOD RESTAURANTS**

Order a plain dish. Meat, fish, steamed vegetable and plain potato. Choose broiled meat, fish, and poultry. Avoid cream sauces, gravy and casserole dishes. Choose broth type soups.

### **SANDWICH SHOPS**

Bread portions can often be excessive. French rolls and baguette are too refined and are usually served in large portions. Select whole grain breads in average size portions. Be aware of sodas. “Natural” does not mean that a product is sugar free. Sodas with added juices should be avoided. Mineral water with essence of flavor is OK to use.

### **HINTS FOR EATING OUT:**

1. Know your meal plan. If you don't, carry a copy with you.
2. Learn the foods and portions on each exchange list. Count carbohydrates when possible.
3. Become familiar with serving sizes by practicing at home. Measuring will teach you to recognize portions. Remember that it's not rude to leave food uneaten if the serving is too large.
4. Don't hesitate to ask questions about how a food is prepared.
5. Carry a few foods with you in order to supplement a meal if necessary.



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