

Maintain a Healthy Diet When Eating Out

(NAPSA)—Today's busy schedules often call for dinner plans at a restaurant. It's a fast and easy solution, but is it healthy? While it may seem difficult to dine out and stay slim, it's not impossible.

According to a recent study conducted by Taco Bell, more than two-thirds of Americans believe there are fewer healthy choices when eating out. However, more restaurants are now offering a variety of healthier options on the menu. If you can't find what you want, ask. Most places are willing to modify an order to meet dietary needs.

"With Americans eating almost six meals per week outside the home, it's important to understand how to make balanced choices in any environment," said registered dietitian Jackie Newgent. "By making a few simple changes, people can eat more nutritiously and still enjoy delicious, flavorful food while eating out."

Are you not sure what to order? Dine out with confidence by following these tasty tips:

- Watch your portions. Order off the menu rather than a buffet to control how much you eat. If portion sizes are large, request a takeout container at the beginning of the meal and save the rest for later.

- Get it on the side. Ask for gravies, sauces, and dressings on the side or substitute them with a low-calorie sauce like salsa. For example, at Taco Bell, customers can order their favorite items "Fresco Style," which cuts fat and calories by replacing the standard cheese and sauce toppings with a zesty, freshly prepared Fiesta Salsa.



- Avoid high calorie beverages. Drink water, diet soda, or coffee instead of regular soda or alcoholic beverages. Switching from regular to diet soda can easily shave off 100 calories a day and make a significant impact on overall health.

- Fill up on veggies. Order extra vegetables whenever possible. Even lettuce, tomatoes and salsa give a nutritional boost to a meal. Plus, veggies are filling and appealing without adding many calories.

- Choose lean meats and cooking methods. Look for the leaner cuts of beef or meat like chicken breast and ask for it baked, grilled, or roasted rather than fried.

- Eat slowly. Take breaks between bites to give your body enough time to signal when it is full. Concentrate on the environment and people you're dining with to keep from devouring food.

For additional lifestyle tips, or to check out a nutrition calculator, visit www.tacobell.com.