

Healthy Eating Workshop

Making Healthier Choices When Eating Out

Workshop outline (60 minutes)

1. Welcome (5 minutes)
2. The Impact of Eating Out on Our Dietary Intake (15 minutes)
3. Strategies to Make Healthier Choices When Eating Out (25 minutes)
4. Let's Practice (10 minutes)
5. Closing (5 minutes)

Suggested handouts:

- Let's Practice Activity Slide #22- My Local Burger Joint
- Let's Practice Activity Slide #25 – Build Your Own Deli Sandwich
- [Guide to Healthy and Active Living in NYC](#)
- [NYC Healthy Plate Planner](#)

1. Welcome (5 minutes)

Slide 1:

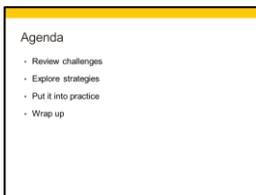


A. Introduction

Welcome to today's healthy eating workshop. My name is <insert facilitator name>. The topic of today's workshop is how to make healthier choices when eating out.

Ask participants to fill out a name tag and discuss any housekeeping such as bathrooms, breaks, etc.

Slide 2:



B. Agenda

Let's review our agenda for today's workshop.

- We'll start with reviewing the challenges in making healthy choices when eating out.
- The bulk of the workshop will be devoted to learning how you can make healthier choices when eating out.
- We'll have time to put what we learned into practice.
- And finally, we'll wrap up by discussing some additional resources you can use to continue learning and answer any questions you have.

 ***If short on time, ask participants to hold their questions until the end of the presentation.***

Slide 3:

Objectives

After today's workshop, you will:

1. Understand how food consumed away from home can affect our diets;
2. Name at least two new strategies to help you make healthier choices when eating out; and
3. Be able to make healthier choices from a restaurant menu.

C. Objectives

After today's workshop, you will:

- Understand how food consumed away from home can affect our diets;
- Name at least two new strategies to help you make healthier choices when eating out; and
- Be able to make healthier choices from a restaurant menu.

2. The Impact of Eating Out on Our Dietary Intake (15 minutes)

Slide 4:

What influences your food choices when ordering from a restaurant?

A. What Influences Your Food Choices When Eating Out?

While the best way to eat a healthy diet is to cook at home and eat out less, we get food from restaurants sometimes. When eating out, there are lots of factors that affect our choices. I'd like to hear from you.

Turn to a person next to you and share the answer to this question. What influences your food choices when eating out?

Allow three minutes for pairs to discuss. Then, ask if one to two people would like to share what they told their partner with the group.

Thanks for sharing. Clearly, there are lots of different factors influencing our food choices from restaurants. Throughout today's workshop, we will discuss some of these factors and how to make healthier choices.

Slide 5:

What's the big deal?

- The amount of money spent on eating food away from home has increased.
- Eating out can increase the amount of calories and sodium you eat.
- A high number of calories and sodium can increase the risk of many health problems.

B. What Is the Big Deal?

Before we dive in to how to make healthier choices when eating out, let's talk about how food eaten away from home contributes to our diet. The amount of money spent on eating food away from home has increased over the last decades and continues to rise. As a result, the amount of calories and sodium eaten away from home has also increased. This can increase the risk for serious health problems.

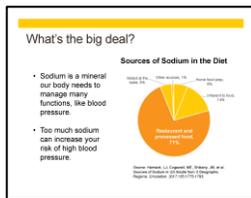
When someone else is preparing our food, we don't have control over how it is made, what ingredients go in it or what portion size we are served.

For example, restaurants may serve portions that are bigger than what we need. Bigger portions mean more calories. Calories are energy that fuel our

bodies, but taking in too many can lead to weight gain and obesity. The recommended number of calories per day depends on your age, weight, sex and how much you exercise.

Sugars that are not found naturally in food and salt are ingredients that may be added to our restaurant food without our knowing it. Intake of added sugars is associated with increased risk of excess weight, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, stroke, heart disease and cavities.

Slide 6:



Sodium, found in salt, is a mineral our body needs to manage many functions, but too much can also be bad for your health. It can increase your risk of high blood pressure, which makes your heart work harder. High blood pressure increases your risk for serious health issues like heart disease and stroke. The recommended daily limit for anyone 14 years of age or over is 2,300 milligrams, which is about a teaspoon of salt. As you can see from the chart, most sodium in the diet comes from restaurants and processed foods, not from salt added during cooking or added at the table.

So, we need to be especially careful with our choices when we eat out if we want to eat healthier.

Notes to facilitator:

- *Other sources of sodium include tap water and supplements.*
- *The percentages on this pie chart do not add up to 100% because the methods used for data collection analysis relied on per person averages and resulted in the loss of a couple percentage points when added together.*

Slide 7:



C. Which Has More Calories and Sodium?

From the descriptions of food items on a menu, it might not always be clear which is the healthier option. Let's see if you can guess which of these entrées has more calories.

Here we have two appetizers from a chain restaurant – the chips and salsa, and the spinach and artichoke dip. Can you guess which is higher in calories?

Wait for and validate all responses, then move to the next slide.

Slide 8:



The chips and salsa has 630 calories and the spinach artichoke dip has 950 calories, which is over 300 more calories. Are you surprised by this? So, clearly, the better choice between these two options to keep your calories lower would be the chips and salsa. Even better, share it with one or two friends so you can still enjoy it, but for fewer calories.

Let's look at the sodium content of these appetizers. Which appetizer do you think has more sodium?

Wait for and validate all responses, then move to the next slide.

Slide 9:



The chips and salsa appetizer has 3,820 milligrams of sodium and the dip has 3,990 milligrams of sodium. If you visit this restaurant, you will see that both items are labeled with the sodium warning icon. The sodium warning icon at chain restaurants can help you find menu items that have 2,300 milligrams or more of sodium. New York City (NYC) requires chain restaurants to label menu items that have more than 2,300 milligrams of sodium. Remember, 2,300 milligrams of sodium is the greatest daily sodium intake that is recommended for anyone age 14 and older. Choose dishes without this warning.

Since restaurant food is usually high in sodium, you may exceed the recommended sodium intake just by choosing a few items off the menu, even if they don't carry the warning icon. This is another reason why controlling your portion sizes is so important.

Slide 10:



Let's do another one. Which of these two sandwiches do you think has more calories?

Wait for and validate all responses, then move to the next slide.

Slide 11:



The steak and cheddar sandwich has 840 calories, which is more than the turkey club at 770 calories. The difference in calories is not much.

Now, let's look at the sodium content of these two sandwiches. Which of these two sandwiches do you think has more sodium?

Wait for and validate all responses, then move to the next slide.

Slide 12:



The steak and cheddar sandwich has 1,970 milligrams of sodium, which is a very high amount, but the turkey club has even more with 2,440 milligrams of sodium. As we already pointed out, this amount is more than the daily recommended sodium intake for anyone age 14 and older.

If you visit this restaurant, you will see that this item on their menu is labeled with the sodium warning icon. If you want to find out the nutrition information without going to the restaurant, you can visit Menustat.org, which we'll talk more about later in the presentation.

It is also important to know that unless you are eating in a chain restaurant, which is now required to post the calorie content of all menu items and show when menu items have 2,300 milligrams or more of sodium, you won't know the calorie and sodium content of foods on the menu. It is hard for everyone, even nutritionists, to guess how much calories and sodium are in a dish, or which is the healthier option given the many factors that can affect our diet.

3. Strategies to Eat Healthy When Eating Out (25 minutes)

Slide 13:



A. Strategies to Make Healthier Choices When Eating Out Overview

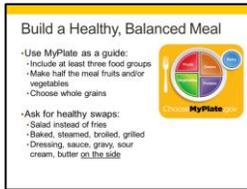
As we've just shown, it isn't always obvious which menu options are healthier. Being aware of this fact alone is the first step towards making healthier food choices when eating out.

We will discuss lots of strategies during this workshop to help you make healthier choices when eating out. Some of these ideas will work for you, and some may not. The goal is for you to learn at least two new strategies you can use when you finish this training.

First, we'll discuss the basics of building a healthy meal. This is a strategy you can use when eating out as well as when preparing food at home. Then, we'll talk about how to read the information on the menu, so you are aware of what you're really eating. And, finally, we'll discuss how you can make healthy choices regarding portion sizes when eating out. Below each strategy are specific ideas we will discuss.

Slide 14:

B. Strategy 1: Build a Healthy, Balanced Meal



Let's explore our first strategy of building a healthy, balanced meal. To get started, we are going to talk about a basic framework, or guidance for eating. By show of hands, who recognizes this image?

This is the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s food guidance for the country and can be used to guide your food choices.

The plate represents each of the five food groups you need for a healthy meal: fruits, vegetables, protein, grains and dairy. The concepts represented in this plate are proportion and variety.

What do you notice about how each food group is displayed on the plate? *Wait for and validate all responses.*

- The five food groups are of different sizes. This can help you plan what types of foods and how much of each food group you should have in your meals.
- The USDA recommends to make half your plate fruits and vegetables. What are some of your favorite fruits and vegetables? Wait for and validate all responses. Make about a quarter of your plate grains, choosing whole grains at least 50% of the time. Whole grains have lots of fiber, which is good for your heart and digestion. Some examples of whole grains are brown rice, whole wheat pasta and oats. Make about a quarter of your plate lean protein foods, like beans, tofu, seafood or chicken breast. Dairy foods are a good addition to meals, and low-fat unflavored dairy foods are recommended for anyone over two years of age. These can include low-fat yogurt, milk and cheese.

While it may be difficult to eat food from all five groups at each meal, it's important to include foods from each food group in the meals and snacks you eat throughout the day. Eating a variety of foods every day allows you to get all the nutrients your body needs.

Additionally, you can ask for healthy swaps to foods that are on the menu.

- Ask for a salad instead of fries, which will help you make half your plate fruits or vegetables.
- Request that foods be baked, steamed, broiled or grilled instead of fried to reduce the amount of calories in your meal.
- When ordering a dish with sauces or dressings, ask for it on the side, so you can control how much you add to your dish.

Slide 15:



Here is an example of what MyPlate might look like with real food. What stands out to you about this plate?

Wait for and validate all responses, then move to next slide.

Slide 16:



You can see here that half the plate is filled with vegetables, one quarter is a whole grain (brown rice, in this case) and one quarter is a lean protein (shrimp, in this example). You'll also notice that there is some fruit on the side for dessert, and the beverage is water.

This plate shows that using MyPlate as a guide to plan meals will help make sure you get a healthy, balanced meal that is filling and appetizing. You can use this approach when planning meals at home too.

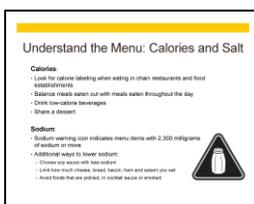
Slide 17:



Plate Planners are available on the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (Health Department)'s website in a variety of languages for different cuisines, including Punjabi, Korean, Bengali and Filipino. You can access them by visiting nyc.gov/health and searching for "plate planners."

Slide 18:

C. Strategy 2: Understand the Menu



Now let's talk about our second strategy of understanding the menu, so you can make healthier choices. Specifically, let's talk about calories and sodium.

All chain restaurants and food establishments are required to post the calorie content of all food menu items.

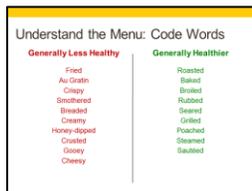
- You can use this information to choose menu items that fit within your daily calorie needs and make choices based on what else you've eaten throughout the day. If you had a small lunch, then maybe a dish with a higher number of calories is okay for you that day.
- Try to offset the calories in your meal by choosing low- or no-calorie beverages such as water, seltzer or unsweetened iced tea. Why waste calories on a beverage?
- Another easy way to lower your calorie intake is to skip dessert or to split it with a friend.

As we discussed earlier, about 70% of the sodium we eat comes from restaurant and processed foods. Foods high in sodium don't always taste salty.

- Remember to look for the sodium warning icon on menus in chain restaurants and choose dishes without this warning.
- Some other things you can do to keep your salt intake low is to:
 - Ask for low-sodium soy sauce.
 - Limit how much cheese, bread and processed meats, such as bacon, ham and salami, you eat. These are all high in sodium.
 - Avoid choosing foods that are pickled, served in cocktail sauce or smoked.

These strategies are especially useful in non-chain restaurants, which do not need to post the sodium warning label on their menus.

Slide 19:



There are lots of clues on a menu that you can use to identify items higher in calories, sodium and added sugars. The words used to describe menu items often show how the item is prepared.

Have you seen any of these words on menus? *Wait for and validate all responses.*

The words on the left describe food preparation and cooking methods that generally add more calories, sodium or sugar to a dish.

The words on the right show healthier cooking methods used to prepare the dish.

However, you don't really know what you are getting at a restaurant unless you see the nutrition information on menu items.

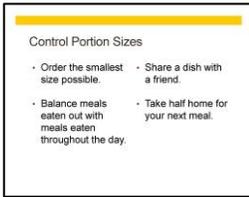
Slide 20:



If the restaurant is a national chain, it must give more nutrition information beyond calories when asked. Many chains post nutrition information for menu items on their website. You can learn about available menu items before going to the restaurant, so that you will know what to avoid and what choices work best for your diet.

Another option to see nutritional information for menu items is Menustat.org. The Health Department developed this free, interactive database of nutritional information for the nation's largest chain restaurants.

Slide 21:



D. Strategy 3: Control Portion Sizes

Restaurants tend to serve large portions, which often results in overeating. We've already discussed using calorie information posted on chain restaurant menus to make healthier choices and help you avoid overeating when eating out.

What are some ways you can control your portion sizes when eating at restaurants or when ordering take out? *Wait for and validate all responses.*

Some other ways to control your portion size are to:

- Order the smallest size possible of a menu item to keep calorie intake low. Sometimes, this might mean ordering from the appetizer or side dish menu.
- Eat lighter meals during the day to balance your calorie intake for the entire day if you know you'll be eating out for dinner.
- Split an entrée or another portion of the meal with a friend. It might be helpful to plan this before you go out. This will help you both keep your portion sizes low and prevent overeating, and, in turn, keep your bill low and help prevent food waste.
- Take half your restaurant meal home to eat another time. That way you are getting two meals for the price of one and it can be lunch or dinner for the next day. If you ask, restaurants will provide you with a to-go container at the beginning of your meal so you can portion out half the meal before you start to eat. They may even split and pack up the dish for you in the kitchen. This can lower any urge to eat the entire meal in one sitting.

4. Let's Practice (10 minutes)

Slide 22:



A. My Local Burger Joint Activity

Note to facilitator: if possible, provide copies of this slide for each participant.

Now let's practice building a healthy restaurant meal using the strategies we just reviewed. Here is a mock restaurant menu for My Local Burger Joint. This is not a chain restaurant, so the menu does not have nutrition information or the sodium warning icon. Using the information we discussed today, build a healthy meal by choosing items from the various menu categories.

You can work alone or with a partner, if you would like. Let's take three minutes to complete this activity. Then, we'll come back together and share a few of the meals you create.

Allow three minutes for pairs to discuss. Then, ask if one to two people would like to share with the whole group what they created or told their partner.

What are some key words that might show additional calories, sodium and sugar in a dish? *Wait for and validate all responses, then move to the next slide.*

Slide 23:



This menu has a lot of items that are likely very high in calories, sodium and sugar, as you can see here in red.

- First, there are a lot of fried and breaded items: panko crust, fried tomatoes, onion rings, and French fries are all examples of fried foods, many with breading. That is going to have many extra calories.
- Next, there are a lot of sugary drinks on this menu. Sugary drinks are beverages with added sugars. Soda and lemonade are both sugary drinks that should be avoided. Milkshakes are also very high in added sugar, and typically have a lot of unhealthy fat.
- Bacon is a highly processed meat. Processed meats have been linked to cancers and generally have a lot of saturated fat and sodium, which, as a reminder, can increase your risk for high blood pressure. Saturated fat has been linked to heart disease. So, we might want to skip this burger.
- We also don't know what is in the special sauce, so it is better to ask for this on the side or to not include it altogether.

What are some healthier options you can choose from this menu? *Wait for and validate all responses, then move to next slide.*

Slide 24:



There are some healthier options available to choose from as you can see here in green. You can choose:

- Seltzer as a drink.
- Iced tea, if it is unsweetened.
- The salad or veggie burger served on a whole wheat bun.

As well as selecting some of these healthier options, what are some other strategies you could use to build a healthy meal at this restaurant? *Wait for and validate all responses.*

Other healthy strategies could include:

- 1) Getting the American over the Supreme burger, if you decide to have a beef burger.
- 2) Taking half a burger home for later or splitting one with a friend;
- 3) Drinking water.
- 4) Asking for the whole wheat bun on any burger you choose.
- 5) Eating an appetizer as your main meal with a salad.

Slide 25:

B. Build Your Own Deli Sandwich Activity

Build Your Own Deli Sandwich					
Protein	Veggies	Bread	Toppings	Sauce	Sides
Smoked Turkey	Spinach	Country White Bread	American Cheese	Mayonaisse	French Fries
Ham	Lettuce	Plain Bagel	Swiss Cheese	Mustards	Onion Rings
Roasted Beef	Chopped Peppers	Croissant	Bacon	Pesto Sauce	Chips
Comed Beef	Tomato	Whole Wheat Bread	Pickles	Honey Mustard	Mozzarella Sticks
Hummus	Cucumber	Whole Wheat Wrap	Avocado	Creamy Ranch	Side Salad
Black Bean Spread	Shredded Carrots	Seeded Pita Bread		BBQ Sauce	Broccoli Stew
	Roasted Veggies	Flax Seed Bread		Olivebalmic Vinegar	Quinoa Salad

Note to facilitator: if possible, provide copies of this slide for each participant.

Now let's practice building a healthy deli sandwich. Here is a mock deli menu. This is not a chain restaurant either, so the menu doesn't have nutrition information or the sodium warning icon. Using the information we discussed today, build a healthy sandwich from this menu.

You can work alone or with a partner, if you would like. Let's take three minutes to complete this activity. Then, we'll come back together and share a few of the meals you create.

Allow three minutes for pairs to discuss. Then, ask if one to two people would like to share with the whole group what they created or told their partner.

Who would like to share their sandwich creation? *Wait for and validate all responses, then move to the next slide.*

Slide 26:

Build Your Own Deli Sandwich					
Protein	Veggies	Bread	Toppings	Sauce	Sides
Smoked Turkey	Spinach	Country White Bread	American Cheese	Mayonaisse	French Fries
Ham	Lettuce	Plain Bagel	Swiss Cheese	Mustards	Onion Rings
Roasted Beef	Chopped Peppers	Croissant	Bacon	Pesto Sauce	Chips
Comed Beef	Tomato	Whole Wheat Bread	Pickles	Honey Mustard	Mozzarella Sticks
Hummus	Cucumber	Whole Wheat Wrap	Avocado	Creamy Ranch	Side Salad
Black Bean Spread	Shredded Carrots	Seeded Pita Bread		BBQ Sauce	Broccoli Stew
	Roasted Veggies	Flax Seed Bread		Olivebalmic Vinegar	Quinoa Salad

Some of the items to watch out for are circled in red.

- Cold-cut deli meats are processed meats. Remember, processed meats have been linked to cancer. Cold-cuts are also high in sodium.
- Choose whole wheat breads over white breads to get more fiber in the sandwich. In addition, bagels and croissants usually have more calories than sandwich bread.
- When choosing sauces, portion size is important, so ask for sauce on the side to control how much you eat.

Slide 27:

Build Your Own Deli Sandwich					
Protein	Veggies	Bread	Toppings	Sauce	Sides
Roasted Turkey	Sprouts	Country White Bread	Swiss Cheese	Mayonnaise	French Fries
Ham	Lettuce	Plain Bagel	Cheddar Cheese	Mustard	Onion Rings
Roasted Beef	Chopped Peppers	Cheesecake	Bacon	Hot Sauce	Chips
Cornd Beef	Tomato	Whole Wheat Bread	Pickles	Honey Mustard	Hotzavala Salad
Hummus	Cucumber	Shiraz Bread	Avocado	Guacamole	Salad
Black Bean Spread	Shredded Carrots	Seeded Pita Bread	Queso	Queso Sauce	Broccoli Slaw
Roasted Beef	Shredded Carrots	Shiraz Bread	Queso	Queso Sauce	Quinoa Salad

But there are lots of healthier options available to choose from, as noted here with green circles. Here are a few examples from this menu:

- Add a lot of veggies to your sandwich. Veggies add great taste and texture, will make half your meal fruits or vegetables and give you important nutrients and fiber.
- Choose whole grain options.
- Choose a salad as a side.

It's important to remember that since all restaurant and processed foods are generally high in sodium, preparing food at home is the best way to control how much sodium and other nutrients you are getting in your food. You might think about making a delicious sandwich like this at home and bringing it to work for lunch! It would most likely cost less than a restaurant sandwich and would only take a few minutes to prepare.

Slide 28:

C. Plan for the Future Activity

Plan For the Future

What strategy discussed today will you use next time you're eating out?

Now, take a minute to plan for the future.

Think by yourself or talk with your neighbor about one way you will use the information you gained today next time you're eating out. Be specific and name how you will use this new information to make healthier choices when eating out.

Allow one minute for participants to discuss among themselves, then bring the group back together for the end of the presentation.

6. Closing (5 minutes)

Slide 29:

A. Resources

Resources
Visit nyc.gov/health and search for:
• "Healthy Eating"
• Healthy Eating and Active Living Guide
• Recipes and Plate Planners
• "farmers markets" to find local produce.
• Text "SeeGood" to 877877 to find your nearest farmers market.
• Onsite education is available at select markets.
Visit ChooseMyPlate.gov .

Now that you have planned to use this information, here are some additional resources available to you to support you in making changes to your diet:

1. The NYC Health Department has many materials on their website that you can read or print. These include:
 - Healthy Eating and Active Living Guide
 - Recipes and Plate Planners

2. The NYC Health Department has a variety of programs at farmers markets. You can find your nearest farmers market location and hours by texting “SoGood” to 877877. You can also download or get a hard copy of a farmers market map. From July through November, the NYC Health Department offers free nutrition education and cooking classes at markets across NYC. The maps show which markets host those classes.
3. The USDA has a variety of healthy eating resources available if you visit choosemyplate.gov, including a place to download handouts and recipes and sign up for email tips.

Slide 30:



B. Thank You for Attending

I hope this workshop has offered you some new ideas and addressed some of the questions you have about making healthier choices when eating out.

We have time to take a few questions before we wrap up.

Presentation Sources:

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