Hector

HEALTHY EATING OUT

An EC funded project
Eating out is no longer just for special occasions.

It appears that modern living is causing people to eat out more and more. Whether they choose a quick meal taken on the run, lunch from the school canteen, snacks at the bar, picnics or formal restaurant dining, it is clear that food is now readily available in great variety for people to eat beyond their dining rooms.

Therefore recommendations for overall healthy eating habits should be followed in all daily events.

HECTOR is a European Commission funded research project involving 34 partners, including 17 Universities / Research Centres, 5 Consumers’ Associations, Governmental and non-governmental organisations and 12 Catering related enterprises (including 6 SMEs) based in 17 European countries. HECTOR aims to enhance knowledge on eating out in Europe.

Find more about HECTOR at: www.nut.uoa.gr/hector.
What is healthy eating?

Eating healthily doesn’t mean you have to give up the foods you enjoy. However, you have to be aware that some foods should not be eaten too often or in large amounts. Above all, it’s important to enjoy food and to enjoy each and every eating occasion.

Healthy eating quite simply means...

...a complete diet choosing food items from each food group

...a balanced diet go for more fruits, vegetables and plant foods in general and less foods of animal origin. Choose vegetable oils instead of fats of animal origin. Choose fish or poultry over red meat

...a varied diet eating different food items within each group and varying them daily, weekly and seasonally.
Always remember...

...about fruit and vegetables
Fruits and vegetables are rich in different nutrients, mainly vitamins, minerals, fibre and other naturally occurring compounds which provide health benefits. Mix and maximize... make your meal colorful by picking a mix of different kinds of vegetables and fruit.

...about fats and fatty foods
Although high fat intake is potentially harmful, it is important to notice that there are different types of fats.

Limit intake:
- **saturated fats** (mainly found in high-fat dairy products, fatty fresh and processed meats, lard and the skin and fat of poultry)
- **cholesterol** (mainly found in dairy fats, liver and other organ meats, egg yolks) and
- **trans fatty acids** (found in many hard margarines and shortenings, fried foods and many bakery/dessert products).

Instead use:
- **unsaturated fats** (mainly found in vegetable oils, namely olive oil, seed oils, soft margarines, most nuts, unsalted olives and fatty fish like salmon, tuna, mackerel, un-salted anchovies and sardines).

* subject to national guidelines
Some practical tips:

- Instead of high fat processed meats, bacon, sausages and salami, why not try lean meats, poultry or fish.
- Remember to trim the fat and leave behind the skin.
- Look for low-fat dairy products.
- Instead of fried foods, why not try grilled, baked, stewed or boiled.
- Go easy on fatty/creamy sauces.
- Choose olive oil...or other vegetable oils, low fat sauces and yoghurt for seasoning.

...about drinks

Drinking water is best to ease your thirst (about 1.5L a day recommended), however, there are other drinks that don’t have added sugars, alcohol or caffeine and can also help to fulfill the need for liquids. Unsweetened natural juices and herbal teas without caffeine (e.g. camomile and mint), are examples of such drinks.

Coffee, as well as black/green teas and some soft drinks, contain caffeine, a stimulating compound for which intake should be in moderation. Caffeine intake should be specifically limited during pregnancy; for children and adolescents caffeine consumption is not recommended.

Adults may consume alcohol in moderation, but drinking in excess is harmful.

Children, adolescents, pregnant and breastfeeding women should not drink alcoholic beverages at all.
...about sugars and sugary products
Soft drinks, cakes, cookies, chocolates, jams, lollipops, and other sweets are examples of foods that can be rich in sugars.

...about salt and salty products
Salt (chemically named sodium chloride) intake should not exceed 5g per day. Always keep in mind that many foods may already contain salt (e.g. breads, cheese). The best way to stay within recommendation is to moderate not only the consumption of salted products such as cured and processed meat, canned foods, chips, salad dressings and sauces but also to moderate the use of salt in cooking and at the table.

The use of herbs
(celery, rosemary, basil, coriander, tarragon, mint, laurel, oregano, parsley)

and spices
(saffron, vanilla, cinnamon, curry, paprika, ...)
in seasoning foods is a good way of adding flavour and highlighting the colour of the foods; it will help with gradually reducing the amount of salt intake.
... to maintain a healthy weight
Following recommendations for healthy eating, choosing small portions and engaging in moderate and regular physical activity is the best way to maintain/achieve a healthy body weight.

So why don’t you go for a walk after a meal?

(Brisk walking for at least 30 minutes a day is a good example of moderate physical activity.)

Or why don’t you go dancing after your meal out?