

TIPS FOR HEALTHY EATING OUT WITH KIDS

Before you go

- Before you go out talk to your kids about what to expect- describe some of the healthy options that will be available and how yummy they will be so they are anticipating these when they arrive.
- If you know you're going to be out at a time when your child is likely to be hungry – for example, after school or sport – try to choose a venue where there are instant healthy options available like fruit salads, wraps, rolls, sushi, cold rolls or ready-made salads in a cabinet.
- Try to arrive in time to order before children are super hungry. All parents know that hungry kids are harder to keep happy.

Ordering

- Portion sizes are often much larger in restaurants and cafes than your child would eat at home. Don't force your child to finish everything on their plate. Some restaurants and cafes allow you to take the leftovers for later.
- Choose two or three suitable menu items, then let your child pick one of them. Narrowing the variety on offer also make choosing less overwhelming.
- If the kids menu options are not appealing, consider ordering an entrée from the adult menu – or choose a HKM Venue where you know suitable healthy kids options will be available.
- If a meal is offered with chips ask if it can be swapped for salad, veg or even some bread.
- Many restaurants, such as Japanese or Asian, suit ordering a few dishes to share. This is great chance for your child to try something new and broaden their tastes.

- If dessert is a must, try to order fruit or dairy based options. Alternatively, consider sharing one dessert between 2 or 3 people. Don't hold back from asking the staff to 'hold the topping' or other sugary additions.
- Choose a healthy drink option- water, 100% fruit juice in small portions, and milk (plain or flavoured), or other low sugar options such as coconut water.
- If drink sizes are large e.g. a 600mL juice or large smoothie, order one and ask for two glasses so you can share it.
- Set expectations- eating out is an occasion in itself- it shouldn't be expected to also have "treat" foods every time you are eating out of home.

Other handy hints

- Role model healthy eating by choosing a healthy meal yourself. Choose a dish containing salad or vegetables and a healthy drink option to go with it.
- Going out is a great opportunity for everyone (especially the parents) to relax and have a family conversation. Try to put lots of focus on the social aspect of eating, rather than on food, and eating behaviours.
- Perhaps ask for bread to be served AFTER the meal has been served. This will avoid kids filling up on bread, before their healthy meal arrives.
- When you talk about food try not to label food as 'good' or 'bad'. Making foods are off limits makes them more desirable.
- If your child is not an adventurous eater, let them try a taste of your meal each time you eat out. They might find they like something new, and can order it next time.
- If your children really wants a less healthy option like burgers or pizza, offer to make a healthier version at home on another occasion.

