

## eating out with multiple sclerosis

Depending on the stage of your disease, dining out with MS may seem overwhelming and scary. The good news is, it doesn't have to be!

**Dine out with confidence once again by following the simple tips below:**

### BEFORE DINING

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#### Be Aware of Ambiance

- Many restaurants dim the lights in the evenings. This is nice for creating an intimate atmosphere but can make it challenging to find an easy route through a darkened restaurant.
- Noisy restaurants can be troublesome and cause fatigue. Before going to a new restaurant, get the opinion of others who have been there, read online reviews or call to see if there is a live band playing. Some restaurants are notoriously loud. If you are concerned, stick to restaurants where you know the noise is kept at a comfortable level.

#### Call Ahead

- Before venturing to a new restaurant, look up the menu online. Call ahead and ask if food items can be made certain ways to avoid swallowing issues and potential choking hazards.
- It may also be important to ask about accommodations for your accessibility needs. Perhaps request a table near the front of the restaurant or near the restrooms.

#### Come Prepared

- If you know you can eat more easily with specialized utensils, bring them along. Having the right tools can provide comfort and confidence!
- Bringing along snacks may be helpful if you find the menu lacks foods that can be eaten with ease.

### AT THE RESTAURANT

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#### Make Special Requests

- Ask the waiter if they can accommodate special orders based on any dietary restrictions you may follow.
- If you order something that requires cutting, ask the waiter to have your meal cut before it's brought to your table.

#### Upgrade Your Glass

- If you find your water glass is too heavy to hold, or if you're likely to spill, ask your waiter for a straw or to only partially fill your glass. Another option is to ask for your water to be served in a wine glass. They are often much lighter and easier to hold than a traditional water glass.

#### Order Wisely

- Do you know you feel better if you eat a certain way? Don't let dining out get in the way of you feeling your best. Choose lean meats, plenty of fruits and vegetables and whole grains whenever possible.
- Choose food items that are grilled, baked, broiled, steamed, or stir-fried. Avoid deep fried items or heavy dressings or sauces.
- Make special requests for how items are prepared. Ask for dressings and sauces on the side or for food items to be cooked with olive oil instead of butter.