

# dining out with cancer

## Cancer

Dining out is one of life's simple pleasures, however, enjoying a meal out while dealing with cancer and its treatment has its challenges. To improve your dining out experience, try following the tips below.

### BEFORE DINING

#### Check the Menu Online

- Research the restaurant's online menu before arriving. This can help relieve possible stress associated with dining out.
- Determine if anything on the menu sounds appetizing.
- Look to see if any menu items can easily be altered to fit within your eating plan.

### AT THE RESTAURANT

#### Choose Healthier Menu Items

- Look for menu item descriptors such as 'baked', 'broiled', or 'steamed'. These words indicate the item was prepared with little or no added fat.
- Avoid menu item descriptors such as 'fried', 'extra crispy', 'smothered', or 'creamy'. These words indicate the item was prepared with high amounts of added fat.
- If eating meat, try to choose a lean protein source, such as chicken or fish.
- Load up on colorful produce! Choose a fruit or vegetable side dish to pair with your entrée.

#### Keep Food Safety in Mind

- Choose restaurants that are clean and willing to cook food to order.
- Avoid eating raw or unpasteurized cheeses. Your server should be able to check if an item has been pasteurized.
- Avoid buffets and salad bars because foods may sit out at uncontrolled temperatures for long periods of time.
- Avoid raw or undercooked fish (sushi, sashimi), shellfish, meats, and poultry.
- Package leftover foods yourself and refrigerate as soon as you arrive home.

#### Hydrate Your Body

Consider water for your drink of choice. Soft drinks, alcoholic beverages, and sweetened tea all contain high amounts of sugar.

#### Dine for You

- Don't be afraid to be assertive. Most restaurants are willing to prepare a meal to meet a customer's needs. Ask the server questions about your order.
  - How is the item prepared?
  - Can the sauce or dressing be served on the side?
  - Can substitutions be made?
  - Can a menu item be thickened or pureed based on your swallowing needs?
  - Will they cook foods to order?