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Outdoor dining tips: 7 ways to maintain your healthy habits this summer



While most people associate summer with lighter fare and increased activity, several food-centered events tend to take place during these few months. Many spend summer weekends picnicking at the park, barbecuing with friends and family and enjoying the beach. Despite the various refreshing and low-calorie options that are often available, hidden calories can quickly work their way in. **Here are some tips to stay on track and maintain your healthy habits this summer:**

- 1. Surround yourself with vegetables.** Even BBQs usually offer veggies. Fill $\frac{1}{2}$ your plate with salad (low-cal dressing and minimal cheese) and sit by the crudité. Non-starchy veggies (e.g. greens, cucumbers, peppers, carrots, tomatoes, mushrooms, etc.) are very low in calories and carbs. **BONUS:** they're high in fiber so they're filling. Add a few spoonfuls of hummus, salsa, guacamole, or Greek yogurt dip to add nutrients while still controlling calories. Going to the beach? Try packing a baggie of raw veggies instead of pretzels.
- 2. Ditch the high-calorie appetizers.** Appetizers such as chips, creamy dips, mayo-based salads, sliders, and cheese & meat plates can quickly contribute to extra calories. *Did you know?* Just a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup serving of macaroni salad contains ~200 calories. Instead, go for lower-calorie, more nutritious apps: steamers, shrimp, oysters, ceviche, chicken & veggie skewers, or grilled Portobello mushrooms.
- 3. Also beware of these sneaky calories:** sugary summer cocktails, fruit smoothies, ice cream, and high-fat processed meats (e.g. sausage, hot dogs, bacon). Opt for 1-2 glasses of wine or light beer (or better yet, a zero-calorie flavored seltzer), an all-veggie smoothie, 1 low-cal fudge pop, and leaner meats such as skinless chicken, shrimp, grilled salmon, lean steak or chicken sausages.
- 4. BYO healthy options.** If you bring a dish, you'll know at least one nutritious option will be available! How about a **watermelon salsa**? Just toss watermelon, cucumber, mango, jalapeño, onion and basil; then add some lime zest, lime juice, salt and pepper.
- 5. Enjoy good company.** Surround yourself with positive, supportive people. Avoid "food pushers" when possible and use assertive language to tell others how you feel. Share your health goals and find a weight-loss role model to spend more time with.
- 6. Continue to log your intake.** Monitoring your eating and activity increases awareness and can help keep you on track. It provides objective information that your healthy habits may be sliding.
- 7. Expect setbacks.** Small lapses are a normal part of the weight-management process. What's more important is how you handle them. While setting goals and having a plan is key, don't forget to take it one day and one meal at a time.

Optimize your physical activity routine this summer

Summer can be the perfect opportunity to step up your physical activity goals. Don't let a change in routine or excessively hot weather cause exercise to fall by the wayside. Instead, think how you can use these summer months to your advantage!



Tips for boosting your summer exercise regimen:

- Set aside the time to assess your current exercise program; create achievable and motivating goals.
- Make a plan and stick to it! Set a weekly walking group at work or with friends in the evening.
- Find an outdoor exercise class that is fun and doesn't feel like a chore.
- Summer travel plans? Plan your workout in advance and block out time in your itinerary. Recruit friends or family to help with motivation.
- Have access to a pool? Swim laps for safe and fun calorie-burning.
- Too hot outside? Find your favorite exercise video online. *Insider tip:* many are free!

Easy, low-calorie, make-ahead gazpacho appetizer

Serves 2-4

Active minutes: 10

Ingredients:

12 strawberries, hulled
8 tomatoes, roughly chopped
2 leaves basil, & few for garnish
1 cucumber, roughly chopped
1 yellow bell pepper, stemmed and seeded
1 clove garlic, finely grated
Kosher salt
Red wine vinegar (a splash)
Dried oregano (as needed)
Olive oil (for brushing and drizzling)
Sliced whole-grain bread, for serving (optional)



Directions:

Add strawberries, tomatoes, basil, cucumber, bell pepper and garlic to a food processor with $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt; pulse until you have a coarse puree. Taste, and add vinegar, some oregano, and more salt if needed. Chill in the refrigerator until ready to serve.

When ready to serve, brush a griddle pan with olive oil and grill the whole-grain bread until toasted.

Serve gazpacho cold. Garnish with a drizzle of olive oil, a few sprigs of torn basil and grilled bread on the side.

Adapted from the Food Network

Call us for more information about scheduling an individual visit with one of our endocrinologists or dietitian, joining our 12-week weight control group, or learning about our meal replacement program.

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