



MAKE GREAT TASTING, HEALTHIER FOOD AND SAVE MONEY!

Healthier eating is becoming more and more important to customers. Follow these tips to make sure you stay ahead of the market.

Achieve at least **nine tips**, including at least one from each of the first four sections (**Portion Size, Fats & Frying, Salt, Vegetables, and Promoting Healthier Options**). Tick the box when you have achieved a tip and aim to add a new tip every month.

PORTION SIZE – Eating too much can lead to obesity, diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

1. Give customers with smaller appetites a **choice**. In addition to your standard portions try at least one of the following:
 - Offer reduced-size lunchtime specials (a container with half rice and half meat)
 - Make small portions or children’s portions available to everyone
2. Try not to overfill or compress food into containers. Or try **using a slightly smaller container** for takeaway dishes.
> **Slightly smaller portion sizes will still be satisfying!**

FATS & FRYING – High-fat foods contain lots of calories, which can make us put on weight. This can lead to diabetes, heart disease and some cancers.

3. As well as frying, include some **steamed, boiled or grilled dishes** among your range of starters and main courses. The food will taste great, give customers more choice and will use less oil!
> **Many restaurants offer starters like grilled dumplings and vegetable soups. Boiled chicken and steamed fish are also proving popular.**
4. Try to **avoid frying food twice** – preparing or pre-cooking food in oil increases the amount of fat in the dish. If you need to pre-prepare, then try parboiling meat and chicken first and flash frying to finish it off.
5. Some customers aren’t afraid to ask for what they want, but most are too shy to ask for something that isn’t on the menu. **Highlight on your menus** or **train staff to tell customers** that they can ask for food to be steamed, boiled or grilled instead of fried, giving your customers that authentic, tasty option.

SALT – It’s very important to watch your salt (or sodium) intake as too much can lead to high blood pressure and an increased risk of stroke and heart disease.

6. These products all contain salt (or sodium):
Salt, MSG, Soy Sauce, Hoi Sin Sauce, Oyster Sauce, Stock, Ketchup
> **Gradually try to use a little less of these ingredients over time. Instead, use herbs and spices and other ingredients like garlic and ginger to add flavour.**
7. Gradually **reduce the amount of salt** you add to vegetables, rice and noodles during cooking.
> **Customers won’t notice if you do this gradually – try adding just a little less each week and aim to reduce salt by a half within a year.**

VEGETABLES – Vegetables are good sources of vitamins and minerals and eating plenty can help prevent heart disease, stroke and some cancers.

- 8. Add vegetables to as many dishes as possible. Try to ensure at least a **50:50 split** between meat and vegetables in main course dishes.
- 9. Try **adding vegetables to boiled rice** to make it more appealing, and promote this option in your restaurant.

PROMOTING HEALTHIER OPTIONS

- 10. **Set menus** – swap one or two items on your set menus for healthier options, e.g. boiled rather than fried rice, vegetable soup instead of spring rolls.
- 11. When customers ask for a recommendation, try **suggesting healthier options**.
- 12. Add a section to your menu, or insert an extra page entitled **'These options are steamed, boiled or grilled, not fried'** to help customers identify healthier options.
- 13. If you have drinks promotions, try **offering low-calorie drinks**, water or pure fruit juices rather than sugary, fizzy drinks.

COMMON PRACTICE TIPS – Did you know that these five tips are already common practice in most restaurants? Make sure you are keeping up with your competition!

- 14. Remove the fat from pork, beef and lamb and the skin from chicken wherever possible.
- 15. Remove salt from tables and counters and provide it to customers only on request.
- 16. When frying, use sunflower or rapeseed oil as a healthier option.
- 17. Change your oil regularly – your food will be healthier and taste much better!
- 18. For healthier chips, use thick, straight-cut chips, fry at 175°C, shake, bang, and drain off any excess fat. Your chips will absorb less fat.

Your own pledge suggestions (agreed with the Healthier Options team)

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Keeping customers happy is important, and the best way to do this is by gradually reducing the fat, salt, sugar and calories in your food so it's healthier but still tastes delicious!

” MAKING SMALL CHANGES CAN HAVE GREAT GAINS OVER THE LONGER TERM - BOTH FOR BUSINESSES AND THEIR CUSTOMERS ”
Sarah Stevenson, Health Improvement Specialist,
Cambridgeshire County Council

Healthier Options is a collaborative initiative between Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridge City Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council and Fenland District Council. It will be independently evaluated by the University of Hertfordshire.

