

The Ripple Effect Diet

... feel how good health looks on you!

Amy's Top 10 Tips For Eating Healthy in Restaurants!

Going out to eat is a customary part of American culture. As a matter of fact, just about half of all the money Americans spend on food is on meals eaten away from home. This adds up to almost \$2,000/year per person. Dining out is one of the precious few leisure activities that we have left and it's become a hobby or even a sport for some of us!

But how can we still enjoy going out to eat and not blow our health and weight control goals faster than you can blow out birthday candles on chocolate-covered ice cream cake?

Well, let me share some of my secrets with you!

I've come up with 10 simple tips that you can follow in any eating out or food-related function that will enable you to stick to your health and weight goals and enjoy your food at the same time.

Amy's Tip #1: Eat Early! Don't eat your largest meal late in the day!

Dinner is often people's largest meal of the day, mainly because it's when we have the most time to actually sit down and eat a good meal, and for some of us it's the *only* real meal!

What you must keep in mind is that *food is energy* and that "*you can't lose it if you don't use it!*" What I mean by that is eating your largest meal late in the evening can cause you to **gain weight** because most of us are physically inactive at night, so we eat and then we just sit around or shortly thereafter go to bed. Well if you want any extra calories you've eaten to be *stored as fat* then you're on the right track!

Remember this tip I tell all my clients:

- 1 Eat Breakfast like a King!
- 2 Lunch like a Prince!
- 3 Dinner like a Pauper!

Amy's Tip #2: Don't show up starving!

All right, fess up, are you one of those people who "save your appetite and barely eat all day when you know you're going out to your favorite restaurant or food-related event so you'll feel justified in indulging when you're there? Well, sorry to be the one to break it to you, but you are not doing your weight control aspirations any favors!!!

Remember this: nothing burns more calories than the process of digesting and assimilating your food. So when you go long periods of time with little or no food, your body perceives a state of starvation and actually slows down your metabolic rate to help it conserve energy so you won't die! Therefore by barely eating all day you are slowing down your fat-burning potential!

And there's more. Research has consistently shown that by the time you *do* actually eat, you are so famished that you not only end up eating more than you would have if you had eaten regularly throughout the day, but more of what you eat GOES DIRECTLY TO FAT STORAGE! Yikes!

Amy's Tip #3: If you chose to drink alcohol, consume it with protein and fat

You know the story. You go to a restaurant and the first thing you're asked by your waiter is "What would you like to drink?"

All other issues concerning alcohol aside, consuming it with nothing else in your stomach is a recipe for diet disaster!

Alcohol is the simplest of all simple sugars. It gets into your blood stream faster than pretty much anything else we know of, that's way it's in certain medications. What this means is, *alcohol spikes your blood sugar* and with nothing else in your system to absorb it, or slow it down like protein or fat, you get a surge of sugar in your body which is soon followed by a c-r-a-s-h! The problem with this crash is that it causes an INCREASE IN YOUR APPETITE, *and on top of that*, it DECREASES YOUR WILLPOWER! Not a good combination if you want to be fit and trim!

What's the answer? Consume alcoholic beverages with some protein and/or fat so your hormonal system can control the blood sugar response.

Amy's Tip #4: ONLY drink bottled (non-tap) water

What's the difference between a raisin and a grape?

You guessed it. Water is vital to the proper function of every cell of your body. Chronic dehydration is a MAJOR problem in our society today. You'd be shocked to learn of all the various illnesses and symptoms that can be alleviated simply by drinking an adequate amount of pure, simple water.

Pure water is always the beverage of choice with your meals because it assists in digestion and assimilation *and* it's calorie-free...which means you can EAT MORE!

Yet all water is not created equal. It is ESSENTIAL that the water you consume be free of contaminants, chemicals and toxins such as chlorine, fluoride, aluminum, arsenic, and other scary bacteria, as well as medical drug and agricultural run-off. Never drink tap water, your health depends on it.

Amy's Tip #5: Fill up on high-volume, low calorie foods

One of my favorite tricks to controlling my weight is to try to always fill up on high-volume, low-calorie foods. You're going for bang for your buck here guys, meaning a lot of nutrition with little calories.

Foods with high-water content like non-creamy/non-bisque soups, vegetables and fruits are great because they fill you up and deliver big time nutrition with little calorie burden! Sounds like what my bathing suit is asking for!

Amy's Tip #6: Slow down & chew your food!

Seems like just about everyone is stressed-out, rushing around and complaining they "don't have time" for this or that. For many of us, taking the time to eat well is not a top priority in our day. How often do you find yourself eating on-the-run, in your car or while you multi-task? How long does it take you to eat a meal? Research has consistently shown, the faster you eat, the more you eat!

Think about it, there's a reason we have thousands of taste buds on our tongues. By eating too quickly, you never really get a chance to *taste your food*, and the center of the brain, called the appetat, doesn't get a chance to register that you've just eaten and then you wonder why you're hungry all the time, never satisfied, or why you eat so much! Digestion experts recommend that each bite should be chewed up to 100xs, and some even say that each bite not be swallowed until liquefied!

There are also biological and aesthetic reasons to slow down and chew your food. Taking a few quick, gulping bites and just swallowing it down, can lead to various digestive problems such as indigestion, GERD or acid reflux, gas, belching, bloating, improper assimilation of nutrients and unnecessary fatigue (because your digestive organs have to work harder than normal and therefore require more energy). By slowing down and properly chewing each bite, the digestive enzymes in your mouth can start to break down the food so it can then be easily managed by the stomach and the digestive organs leading to increased absorption of nutrients and increased energy.

Perhaps most importantly, by eating too fast you deny yourself an opportunity to experience one of life's most wonderful, primal pleasures, EATING and why the heck would you do that?!?! So next time you eat, take a deep breath, tune into your food and slow down and enjoy, your stomach will thank you!

Amy's Tip #7: Be aware of portion sizes!

More and more I see so many people who can't seem to lose weight. Often I find one of the primary reasons is they just eat *too much food at one time!* The saddest part of all is that most of the time **they don't even know they are** because they are not hip to a major health-sabotaging societal trend called "Portion Distortion!" But, that's what I'm here for!

Research has shown the more food put in front of us and even the size of the plate or bowl it's served on, results in a higher intake of calories. Nowadays, all-you-can-eat buffets, "value-packs" and "super-sized" servings result in consuming more food than we need. I think we should rename these things as: "*all-you-can-overeat*", "*pack-the-pounds on-packs*" and "*soon I'm -a-super-size*"!

Is it me or is there a direct relationship between our ever-expanding waist sizes and the portions served to us? The size of just about everything nowadays, like bagels, muffins, sandwiches, subs, steaks, pasta, rice, movie theatre popcorn, beverages, soda and typical restaurant entrees contain way more calories than our bodies' require at that time. Remember this; anything your body can't use at that time IS STORED. The question is: *Where do you store it?* You'd be downright *horrified* if I took you out to eat and I told you how much fat, sugar, salt and calories you were actually eating with any typical meal or serving!

Each of us needs to learn how much food we need to function and feel our best. A very important principle of health is that we are all biochemically unique and our personal nutritional requirements are dependent on various factors like our lifestyle, age, gender, stress level, exercise (or lack of) habits etc. *and* that these needs and requirements change!

So the next time you eat, stop and take a look at your serving size and the ratio of protein, fat and carbohydrate in front of you. Then tune into *how you feel* after the meal. Your body and any symptoms will tell you if the foods and portions worked for you. You'll know when you get it right when you have increased sense of mental, physical *and* emotional energy, and isn't that what it's all about?

Amy's Tip #8: Ask for what you want!

Next time you go out to eat or find yourself ordering something, remember this: YOU ARE THE CUSTOMER so ask for it the way *you* want it!

Let me give you a little pep talk here. Keep in mind that the food in front of you is going to *become you*: your hair, your nails, your muscles, your bones, your liver and your heart, etc., and by becoming you, it manifests into how well your body, mind, organs etc, function, or put simply, how you look and feel every moment of every day.

So the question I have for you is: What are you choosing to become? Well, at every meal, every day, the choice is yours!

Remember this, it's your body, it's your health and you are the one who has to live with the consequences of what you put in it! *You* are the one who has to deal with what it's like to live with heart disease, high-blood pressure, diabetes, mood swings, achy joints, bad skin, dry hair, energy problems, embarrassing gas, belching, bloating, or even the demoralizing emotional and spiritual pain of constantly criticizing and berating yourself every time you look in the mirror or get dressed. Is that the life you want?

Well the good news is your next meal is your chance to start experiencing more of the kind of life you want! So speak up for yourself and don't be afraid to ask for your food the way you want it; perhaps with reduced cheese, no added salt, the dressing or sauce on the side, or steamed veggies instead of starches like bread, pasta, rice, hash browns or mashed or sautéed potatoes. Your figure, health and peace of mind are worth it!

Amy's Tip #9: Don't overeat!

Do you often “eat the whole thing” only to realize after you weren't even hungry anymore? How often do you hear yourself saying: “Ughh...I'm stuffed!” and then feel bad about yourself for the rest of the day or night? Or maybe you've got some sort of social event or party coming up or you're going to your favorite restaurant and you “save your appetite” all day so you can be really hungry and go crazy when you get there.

These are all weight-control nightmares!

A good rule of thumb that I teach all my clients is called The 80-20 Rule. It means eat only to the point of being about 80% full, saving about 20% room for digestion. NEVER GET STUFFED. The trick is to *stay aware of how you feel* both in general and while you're eating. Eat till you're comfortably satisfied but don't need to loosen your belt a notch or two.

Follow the 80-20 Rule, and you'll be amazed how much better you'll feel after you eat and how much more energy you have. The best part is you won't have to go lie down on the couch after the meal or make a B-Line for the nearest Starbucks just to keep you going that day!

Amy's Tip #10: ENJOY YOUR FOOD AND YOURSELF!

I don't know about you, but I want to enjoy my life; and food, eating and dining with friends are a big part of that!

Think of a function, event, or occasion that doesn't in some way involve food. Can you think of any? Weddings, funerals, holidays, birthdays, get-togethers, lunch-ins, banquets, dinners, parties and of course “going out to eat” or even just meeting for drinks or coffee all involve FOOD!

Obviously eating is an integral part of our culture, and as such can be either a source of pleasure or pain. I have found what determines the difference between the two is to learn just a little bit about how your wonderful body works, tuning in to your body's unique needs and then setting up the game so you can win; meaning, making your health and your weight *one of the priorities* in your life, not necessarily the *top* priority, but at least *at the top*.

If you do those things, you will not only enjoy your food, but you will also enjoy how absolutely wonderful *good health looks and feels on you*, and that's what I call **The Ripple Effect**, and that's the name of the game!

Amy Fournier Constantino is a recognized health and fitness expert. She is available for speaking engagements, workshops, media opportunities, group exercise classes and private consultation. To learn more about Amy or to contact her, please visit: www.therippleeffectdiet.com, email: therippleeffect@aol.com or call: 978-500-8943.

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