

Eating Healthy WHILE EATING OUT

by Molly Kimball, RD, CSSD



This year at the OAC's 6th Annual *Your Weight Matters* National Convention, we're excited to introduce a very unique addition to our expert speaker lineup – Molly Kimball, RD, CSSD, a registered dietitian and nutrition expert based in New Orleans, where the National Convention will be hosted.

In August, Molly will bring to the Convention stage her expertise in nutrition and her passion for helping others live their healthiest lives possible! She currently manages the nutrition program at the Ochsner Fitness Center in New Orleans and is also the founder of Eat Fit NOLA – a nonprofit initiative of Ochsner Health System. This proactive organization aims to make the healthy choice the easy choice by collaborating with local restaurant owners, chefs, corner markets, event venues and food service establishments to develop innovative dishes that match the Eat Fit nutritional criteria.

With all of the people who have sought Molly's counsel throughout the years, we're proud to have her as a 2017 OAC National Convention speaker right in her home town! As we look ahead to the Convention next month, we wanted to offer a sneak peek at some of the knowledge Molly will share this August about making healthy choices and eating out – and we decided to do it interview style!

Here's what Molly had to say:

1. WHAT TIPS OR THINGS SHOULD WE CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A RESTAURANT TO EAT AT?

At almost any restaurant, anything can be modified to be healthy and nutritious – you just have to know what to look for (except if they only offer fried foods!). Try not to overcomplicate your food choices, and look at the menu ahead of time so that you're not distracted at the restaurant by all of the food passing by. However, try to find places that make it easier for you to eat healthy by featuring different options and preparations like fresh seafood, vegetables and whole-grain pasta. It's okay to substitute items and ask for the sauce and dressing on the side to make healthier choices.

2. HOW SHOULD WE NAVIGATE THE MENU?

Usually, I don't look at salads first. Instead, I look at the entrees so I can see what proteins and side items are offered. Salads are sometimes among the highest calorie items on the menu because of the added dressings and toppings. When I'm looking at the entrees, I always ask myself:

- **Do the entrees look appetizing?**
- **What kinds of side items do they offer?**
- **How can I possibly adjust the menu to fit my needs?**

I might look at the salads if I can't find anything from the entree items, but I look carefully at the toppings. When the food gets to your table, this is when you should decide if you want to box some of it up. As far as appetizers go, you should really only order them if you can find something very lean or if you want to indulge in something without eating a lot of it.

3. ARE THERE CERTAIN ITEMS OR PREPARATIONS WE SHOULD AVOID?

Try avoiding fried foods, panko-crusted foods, heavy creams, starchy items, certain sauces and free items on the table such as bread or chips. It's important to ask if things are crusted and how they are prepared. If you're really craving something specific, get it on the side so you can have just a bit of it. Make that decision ahead of time so that you can come to the table prepared.

4. DO YOU HAVE ANY MOTIVATIONAL TIPS TO HELP US MAKE THE CORRECT EATING CHOICES WHILE EATING OUT?

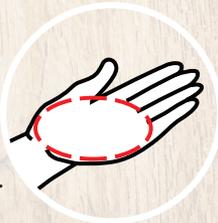
For most people, dining out is the norm. Don't fake yourself out by saying it's a special occasion when it's actually the norm. Your long-term health concerns usually don't provide immediate behavior changes. So, when making food choices, think about how you're going to feel after the meal later. This is a good motivator. On the flip side, think about how much better you'll feel when you make better choices.

5. WHAT HEALTHY EATING TIPS CAN YOU OFFER FOR CHILDREN AT RESTAURANTS?

If you want healthy items for kids, don't order off of the kid's menu. Most chain restaurants don't offer healthy kid menu items. Instead, find healthy options from the adult menu to order. This may be a good time to use the to-go box because you know your child won't eat it all.

6. DO YOU HAVE ANY TIPS FOR EATING THE CORRECT PORTION SIZES?

Your protein portion should be the size of your palm. Make sure you get protein with your meal because it will keep you fuller for longer periods of time. Eat unlimited vegetables and request fats on the side such as sauces, dressings and others. That way, you can have smaller amounts of it. You can also ask for your food to be prepared without the fats. For the carbs, you can usually leave it up to negotiation. Most places don't offer whole-grain options. Negotiate!



If you have the bread or chips, use that as your carb choice for the meal. If you want your starch in your entree, don't eat the appetizer. ALWAYS eat desserts with your friends/family so you can share them. Alcohol is also negotiable.

7. WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE RESTAURANTS?

Indian food is one of my favorite cuisines, and I love getting tandoori chicken or tandoori fish. Both options are cooked in a clay pot so they're lower on oils and also super tasty! Sushi is an additional option which offers you fresh seafood, and I also like getting fajita-styled food. Steak restaurants are another one of my favorite types of restaurants where I order steak cooked rare, charred on the outside and served with veggies on the side. Here in New Orleans, I also like eating at Thai restaurants that offer lean proteins packed with fun flavors.

8. WHAT ARE SOME COMMON CONCERNS YOU HEAR FROM OTHERS ABOUT STICKING TO HEALTHY NUTRITION HABITS?

Many individuals believe that healthy nutrition habits require a lot of work and deprivation, so they put pressure on themselves to be perfect which only results in feelings of guilt. You don't have to go to Whole Foods or farmers markets to eat healthy because you can find healthy options almost anywhere! Don't get lost in the "Only eat non-gmo or organic food" types of messages and miss the actual goal of eating healthy. People over-complicate things, so it's helpful to break down these barriers and strive for improvement – not perfection.

9. WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO BE A SPEAKER AT THE 2017 YOUR WEIGHT MATTERS NATIONAL CONVENTION?

I'm really excited to speak in New Orleans because I'm looking forward to the opportunity to share about Eat Fit NOLA and offer healthy options for individuals while they're visiting the city. Eat Fit NOLA offers more than 100 restaurants in New Orleans, and because they're a non-profit organization, they don't charge anyone to participate!

About the Author:

Molly Kimble, RD, CSSD, is a well-respected nutrition expert with a passion for making it easy for people to live their healthiest lives possible. An established nutrition consultant, she is a registered dietician, board certified as a specialist in sports dietetics, and is also a nutrition and fitness expert for WGNO News as well as a nutrition columnist for NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune.



ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



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The OAC knows that the journey with weight can be challenging but we also know that great things happen when we learn, connect and engage. That is why the OAC Community exists. Our Community is designed to provide quality education, ongoing support programs, an opportunity to connect, and a place to take action on important issues.

Through the OAC Community, you can get access to:

- Weight & Health Education • Community Blogs
 - Community Discussion Forum
 - Ongoing Support • Meaningful Connections
- AND MUCH MORE**



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