



Is Your Social Life Making You Fat?

How to avoid letting others steer your diet off course

by Tanya Zuckerbrot, MS, RD, author of [The F-Factor Diet](#).

Eating **healthy** is challenging for many **people**. Most **will** admit that **swapping French fries** for steamed broccoli or ordering a salad with dressing on the side is a difficult choice to make. But when your spouse or best friend orders a burger and large fries, it makes eating healthy that much more difficult. Don't let others' bad habits sabotage your efforts to eat right. Here are some helpful tips for dieting while eating or living with a non-dieter.

1) Switch to low-fat versions of full-fat favorites. Don't worry, your spouse won't notice if you start cooking with lean protein or switch from full-fat to low-fat cheese. So go ahead and use ground turkey breast or lean ground beef in your favorite burger recipe. And make your omelets with egg whites and low-fat cheese instead of whole eggs and full-fat cheese. Use nonstick spray instead of smothering the pan in oil or butter. Not only will you avoid tons of calories and fat, but your spouse won't even realize you made the switch.

2) Keep healthy snacks on hand. There is no need to have regular potato or tortilla chips lying around the house. Instead, buy baked varieties. Also, keep fruits, such as apples and pears, or nuts, such as pistachios, available as easy snacks to grab on the go. Having healthy options easily accessible will keep you from munching on unhealthy foods when you sit down with your roommates to watch TV or run out the door to meet up with friends.

3) Switch from regular soda to diet soda. One can of regular soda has 155 calories and 40 grams of carbohydrates. That is equivalent to almost three slices of white bread! In comparison, diet soda has no calories or carbohydrates. If your spouse or roommate likes regular soda, make sure to have diet soda available for yourself.

4) Add Fibersure to provide additional fiber. Mix Fibersure or other fiber **powder** into foods like cereal, oatmeal and yogurt. Each teaspoon adds five grams of fiber, which **will** help you feel full longer and less tempted to snack when you see others reach for a treat.

5) Not all metabolisms are created equal. Ever notice that if you try to eat the same way your guy eats, you gain **weight** and he doesn't? That is because men naturally have more muscle mass than women do, so they have faster metabolisms. Therefore, if you are eating the same foods and quantities as your husband or boyfriend, you are going to gain weight. Recognize this and stick to your diet, and if you're going to order the same dish as your guy, always make sure to eat a smaller portion.

6) Ask for support. Making your spouse, best friend and **family** members aware of your **dieting** efforts **will** help keep you on track. Your mom will stop pressuring you to try her homemade chocolate cake and your husband may even offer to trade in a pizza dinner for a healthier meal.

7) Switch to whole-wheat products. Buy whole-wheat bread, wraps and pastas. These products taste just as good as the white varieties but contain fiber and whole grains. Also, buy high-fiber cereals, such as Fiber One. This is a great snack to mix into yogurt or cottage cheese and even add as a topping to a small cup of low-fat frozen yogurt.

8) Don't make food the focus. Spending time with loved ones doesn't have to revolve around food. Go out for a walk instead of meeting for dessert, or find another hobby you and your mother-in-law have in common other than baking. Arrange mealtimes with family and friends who share your healthy habits.

9) Dining out doesn't have to sabotage your dieting efforts. Be sure to start off with a soup or salad so you are less tempted to dig into the plate of fried calamari your friend ordered. Then make the decision in advance to order a large salad with grilled chicken or broiled fish with steamed vegetables, and order before others do. This way, when the waiter comes around, your mind is made up and you are less likely to deviate from your healthy plan.

10) Have that bite of cake, but not the entire slice. Allow yourself a bite or two of dessert so you don't feel deprived. But order a **cup of coffee** or **tea** so that you're occupied while your friends are digging into the tiramisu or chocolate cake. You will be less tempted to continue eating the dessert if you're busy sipping your tea and making good conversation.

To get more tips on staying on track when eating with non-dieters and learn the secrets to permanent weight loss, read Tanya Zuckerbrot's [*The F-Factor Diet*](#). 🌸