Ordering your drink…
- Always ask for water. Tap water is safe to drink, it is a great way to keep yourself hydrated, and it’s FREE!
- If you want something in addition try unsweetened tea (both hot & cold), fresh squeezed fruit juice (with no added sugar), fat-free or low-fat milk, or other drinks without added sugars such as diet sodas.
  - Unsweetened tea and water have 0 calories.
  - 1 cup (8oz) of 1% milk has around 100 calories.
  - 1 cup (8oz) of 100% fruit juice averages between 100 and 180 calories, it varies by fruit.
  - A medium regular soft drink (22 oz) has roughly 280 calories.
- Go easy on alcoholic drinks; they are high in calories and expensive.
  - A margarita has around 425 calories and will run you $7-10.
  - A pint (16oz) of beer has around 200 calories and can be between $3 and $7.
  - A gin and tonic has about 160 calories and will be $6-8.
  - A glass of wine (both red and white) runs about 115 calories and will cost around $6-10.

If the restaurant offers you bread, or tortilla chips…
- Go slow with bread and chips.
- If you aren’t too hungry, pass on the bread and chips altogether and save your appetite for the food you ordered.
- If you decide to enjoy some bread, try topping it with olive oil rather than butter. Fresh cracked pepper can also add some nice flavor without any added calories or salt.
  - Olive oil is high in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats (heart healthy fats) while butter is high in saturated fat (unhealthy fat).

Thinking of getting an appetizer?
- Start your meal with a salad that is packed with veggies.
  - Spring greens and spinach will provide you with even more nutrients than romaine or head lettuce.
  - Ask for the salad dressing to be served on the side so you can use the amount you want, or ask for oil and vinegar and make your own.
    - Just 2 tablespoons of salad dressing can have between 100 and 200 calories, most of it is coming from fat.
- A broth based, not cream based, soup can also be a great appetizer. A broth or vegetable based soup can have half as many calories as its creamy alternatives.
  - Soup is generally inexpensive ($2-5) and a great way to satiate your appetite. Ordering soup should mean you can order a smaller main dish saving yourself money.
- Go easy on creamy or cheesy options like nachos, spinach & artichoke dip, quesadillas, etc.
  - Hummus served with vegetables can be a great substitute to share with the table.

Time for the main dish…
- Most restaurants serve meals that are larger than you need. Try one of these strategies to keep from over-eating and over-spending:
  - Resign from the “clean your plate club” – leave food on your plate and take the leftovers home with you. Leftovers can be great for lunch or dinner the next day.
  - Share a main dish with a friend.
  - Order an appetizer or a side dish instead of an entrée.
- Ordering a vegetarian option will often result in a healthier meal and it will cost less.
- Choose main dishes that have lots of vegetables such as stir-fries, kebobs, or pasta with vegetables and tomato sauce.
  - Vegetables will fill you up and add good flavor and bright colors to your plate. They are also high in vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and fiber.
Main dish continued…

- Ask for whole wheat bread on your sandwich or burger. Ask for extra vegetables too! Most restaurants will not charge you an additional fee, but check with your server to be sure.
- Ordering pizza?
  - Cover it in veggies!! Avoid heavy toppings like pepperoni and sausage. Try ordering it with half cheese. Order whole wheat crust if it’s an option.
- Order baked, braised, broiled, grilled, poached, roasted, or steamed foods instead of those that are batter-fried, pan-fried, buttered, creamed, crispy, or breaded.
- Go slow on foods with heavy cream sauces or gravies.
  - For example: sour cream, spicy mayo, cheese, Alfredo sauce, Bolognese sauce, vodka sauce, any meat based gravy, etc.
- Does your meal come with a side?
  - Dishes often come with a side of fries, mashed potatoes, or hash browns. Ask your server if you can have vegetables, a green salad, or fresh fruit instead.
- Is there an all-you-can-eat buffet?
  - Ordering a la carte will generally cost you less, you will get exactly what you want, and you will be less likely to overeat.

Thinking about dessert?

- Fresh berries and fruit are a great way to finish your meal with something sweet and healthy.
- Going for something more decadent? Order your favorite dessert with enough forks for the table. Savor every bite!
- Go slow with after dinner drinks, they tend to be very sweet and contain a lot of added sugar.
- Feeling sleepy, thinking of getting a coffee or tea?
  - Try going for a walk after dinner, this will aid your digestion and wake you up by getting your blood flowing.
  - If a walk is not possible, try ordering tea, half-caf-coffee, or decaf coffee; having caffeine late at night can disrupt your sleep cycle.

Other tips

- Drink water throughout the day and during every meal; this will keep you hydrated and prevent you from thinking that your thirst is hunger.
- Plan ahead. Look at the menu before you go, most restaurants have their menus posted online and some even offer nutritious facts. Make your decision in advance so you won’t have to think about it while enjoying time with your friends.
- Take your time and enjoy each bite of your meal.
  - Your stomach will be full before your brain gets the message. It takes about 20 minutes for your brain to realize that your body is getting food. Eating slowly gives your brain time to get the message and helps you enjoy each bite.
- Choose a smaller portion when possible, this will probably be enough to eat and it will cost less.
- On long commutes or trips, pack some fresh fruit, cut-up vegetables, low-fat string cheese sticks, or a handful of unsalted nuts. Packing food will be healthier and less expensive than last minute alternatives.
  - There are few healthy options on the road and you will often be given the choice of fast food or junk food.
- When choosing condiments, especially for sandwiches and burgers, choose ones with fewer calories. Try replacing mayonnaise, ranch, or other heavy dressings with mustard, vinegar, and a little ketchup.

Resources
MIT Medical Center for Health Promotion and Wellness. Healthy eating @ MIT! Retrieved from http://medweb.mit.edu/wellness/topics/pdfs/nutrition/Eating_Healthfully_at_MIT_-_What_are_my_options.pdf.