

EATING OUT: ITALIAN FOOD

It is ok to indulge a little and occasionally enjoy a meal out. Remember to keep in mind your limitations and be aware of the foods and fluids you need to watch.

From www.edren.org

Don't hesitate to ask about the ingredients if the dish is unfamiliar to you and choose dishes that are appropriate for you.

Remember that you are the paying customer. Don't be afraid to ask for minor recipe changes such as "please don't add any extra salt to mine".

Remember to stay within your nutritional and fluid requirements and be aware of the foods and fluids to watch.

Remember, if you are on regular phosphate binder medication (e.g. Phosex, Fosrenol, Renagel) you should take them to the restaurant with you and take them just before eating.



If dining at a restaurant you are not familiar with, call ahead to ask about the menu.

Always remember that you are the customer and Enjoy!

Meal Suggestions

Starters

Bread
Parma Ham
Tapas
Polenta (cornmeal dish)
Gnocchi (dumplings)
Insalata (fresh salad)



Main Courses

Pasta dishes
- e.g. Pasta primavera
Chicken/Fish dishes
- e.g. Veal piccata
Pan pizza
- e.g. Chicken & pineapple
Paella
Risotto
Lasagna
Canneloni



Desserts

Tiramisu
Italian ice & Sorbet
Cheesecake
Spumoni ice cream
Fruit tart
Profiteroles



Top Tips

- Limit "antipasto" or entrees as this often includes cheese, olives, smoked meats, and marinated vegetables and fish, which are high in sodium.
- Remember to count high content fluid foods—e.g. Italian ice, in your fluid restriction.
 - Avoid adding extra parmesan or other hard cheeses to dishes – hard cheese is high in salt and phosphate. Soft cheeses such as ricotta, mascarpone and mozzarella are better choices.



Bread

Bread is a good choice for a starter or accompaniment.

- Herb bread makes a good accompaniment to a meal.
- For less fat, go easy on the butter or olive oil for dipping.
- Be aware that Garlic or Parmesan breads are higher in sodium.
- Be careful as certain breads, such as focaccia and those with added ingredients such as olives, can be more salty.

Pizza

Pizza is usually salty and high in potassium and phosphorous so only eat small amounts.

- **Avoid** high potassium vegetable toppings on pizza – e.g. spinach or mushrooms; choose lower potassium foods – e.g. peppers, onions and tuna instead.
- If you have pizza, supplement it with a small salad so that you eat less pizza.



- Chicken or tuna pizzas may contain less salt than those with salami,
- pepperoni or ham/bacon.
- Go for pizzas with a thick base, so you fill up on bread rather than the toppings.

Pasta

Pasta is low in potassium, phosphate and fat, which makes it a good choice.

- As pasta is a good option it is ok to have some sauce.
- If possible, order the sauce on the side, but remember that many Italian restaurants already have their sauce and pastas mixed.

Opt for:

- primavera vegetable sauces
- white wine sauce
- pesto sauce
- piccata lemon butter sauce



Also select: plain pasta with other ingredients, such as:

- tuna
- fresh vegetables
- olive oil
- lemon juice
- fresh basil



You could choose:

- carbonara type dish with a creamy sauce
- marinara, napoli or arrabbiata type dish which typically contains a tomato-based sauce such as spaghetti bolognaise.

Although these sauces tend to be higher in potassium, they are ok to have with pasta.

In addition, you could try: ravioli filled with vegetables or meat instead of cheese.

- Pasta dishes made with lots of garlic, parsley and olive oil are a good choice.
- If making your own sauce or dressing, use balsamic vinegar, basil, herbs and chilli to flavour as an alternative to salt.



By Heidi Lewis & Renal Dietitians, RIE