

Healthier catering tips for chip shops

Guidance on healthier catering tips for chip shops.

Healthier eating is becoming more and more important to customers. Here are some practical catering suggestions to help support your customers with a healthier lifestyle.

Following these tips when you're frying can help you;

- use less oil
- make your chips crispier and tastier
- lower the amount of fat, saturated fat and salt in a portion

Try to achieve as many tips as possible. You may already be achieving several of these but be prepared to go further and make real changes to help your customers make healthier choices.

Fats and frying

High-fat foods contain lots of calories, which can lead to weight gain. This in turn can lead to type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. Reducing saturated fat intake can lower blood cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart disease.

- **Use plain, uncoated, medium or thick, straight-cut chips.** These absorb less fat, so you use less oil and it's healthier for your customers. Make your chips using a cutter with at least a 14mm (just over half an inch) cross-section.
- **Fry at 160-165°C (high efficiency fryer) or 175°C (traditional fryer).**
 - Heating oil to 160-165°C if you have a high efficiency fryer or 175°C if you have a traditional fryer before you start frying gives you crispier, more appealing chips that absorb less fat and means you use less oil.
 - Each time you fry a new batch, let the oil come back up to the appropriate temperature before you start.
 - Overloading your fryer, or adding too much food when you're frying, drops the temperature of the oil, makes the chips greasier and uses more oil. If you use baskets, they shouldn't look more than half full.
- **Check the temperature.** Make sure the temperature on your range is accurate. You can do this by heating the oil and testing the temperature in the middle of the oil with a catering thermometer. If you have a range with a thermostat, make sure the probe is clean when you drain the fryer. You should have the thermostat checked as part of a regular service of your equipment.
- **Cook for 5-6 minutes.** The cooking time for chips will depend on the type of potato you use. For thick-cut fresh potatoes, cooked at 160-165°C in a high efficiency fryer or 175°C in a traditional fryer, it's about 5-6 minutes until the chips are a pale, golden colour. If you cook them straight through and take them out of the oil as soon as they are cooked, they will absorb less fat and you will use less oil.
- If you decide to blanch some chips, to help with a busy service, then you should still use best practice when you blanch and fry at 160-165°C if you have a high efficiency fryer or 175°C if you have a traditional fryer, allowing the oil to come back up to the appropriate temperature between batches. This will reduce the fat absorption and help prevent greasy chips.

- Avoid double or triple cooking and reheating foods in oil as this will increase the fat content of the food.
- **Bang, shake and drain chips.** By shaking the chips and banging the wire scoop several times, you can reduce fat absorption by 20% and make your chips crispier. This is because chips carry on absorbing fat after they come out of the fryer. If you bang and shake you'll use less oil, top up the oil less often and empty the drain in the chip box less often.
- Use a liquid oil. The more saturated fat in your oil the more saturated fat there will be in your chips. Liquid oils such as sunflower and rapeseed have about 10% saturated fat whereas solid oils such as palm oil or beef fat typically have about 50% saturated fat. Whichever oil you choose, always make sure it is not hydrogenated. You can check this on the ingredients list.

Portion size

Eating too many calories can lead to obesity, which in turn increases the risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. Even small reductions at each meal can make a real difference.

- **Consider reducing portion sizes** across your menu and ask staff to keep to these portion sizes and provide consistency for your customers.

Sugar

Eating too many foods and drinks high in sugar can contribute to excess calories and can lead to weight gain, which in turn increases the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke and some cancers. It is also linked to tooth decay.

- **Swap to lower sugar, fat and salt versions of sauces and condiments** e.g. ketchup, mayonnaise, tartare sauce etc.
- **Offer healthier drinks as the default option.** This can include water, lower fat milks, low calorie or no added sugar drinks, or pure fruit juices (in a 150ml serving size or as close to this volume as possible) rather than sugary drinks.

Salt

It is important to reduce salt intake as too much salt can lead to high blood pressure and an increased risk of stroke and heart disease.

- Lots of people are trying to cut down on the amount of salt they eat. You can help your customers by doing the following;
 - Only add salt if customers request it
 - Do not add salt to batter mix. If you buy batter mix, check the ingredients and try to choose one that doesn't contain salt
 - Use a salt shaker with fewer holes - it is best practice to have a maximum of five holes.

Promote healthier options

Although it is important to improve the nutrient content of all menu items, you can also develop promotions that offer a unique selling point and encourage customers to pick a healthier meal or snack to eat.

- **Include healthier options.** Consider including healthier drinks and salad or vegetables and a piece of fruit with meal deals - this could also give you the competitive edge.
- **Offer meal deals** or set menus with reduced portion sizes.

Source healthier ingredients and food products from suppliers

[Check the nutrition information](#) about the foods and drinks you buy in and choose options with higher fibre and less salt, sugar and fats. Your supplier may be able to assist you.

Provide energy information

[Calorie Wise](#) is a free scheme in Northern Ireland to help catering businesses display calorie information on menus. This allows customers to have the information they need to make healthier choices when eating out.

The Food Standards Agency provides a free, online tool called [MenuCal](#) which helps businesses to calculate the energy value of food, in both kilojoules and kilocalories. The MenuCal tool also assists businesses to manage allergen information.