Seek Out Smart Options Away from Home

You don’t have to drop your healthy habits when eating away from home. Many restaurants, workplaces and school cafeterias now offer better-for-you options and menus. But it may still take a little bit of effort and a splash of willpower to construct a healthy meal away from home. Here are some tips to help.

• Do some research. Look up menus and nutrition info online to find healthier options. Ask servers or managers about ingredients, preparation methods and substitutions.

• Look for clues. The menu may have “healthy” designations or symbols, or key words in item names (like light, fresh, fit, vegetarian), which indicate they could be a better choice.

• Add color. Look for fruits and vegetables on the menu that you can add as sides or substitutes in your meal.

• Avoid the fryer. Deep-fried foods tend to be less healthy than other options, like grilled, roasted, steamed and baked.

• Keep it on the side. Request that butter, cheese, toppings, salad dressings, sauces and gravies be served on the side so you control how much you eat.

• Stick with water. Stay away from sugary soft drinks, sweet tea and cocktails. They’re loaded with added sugars and extra calories you don’t need.

• Split it. If the portions are large, share something or set aside half to take home before you start eating. Turn one oversized portion into two meals.

• Bring it from home. Pack your own healthy meals and snacks so you can resist the temptations on the cafeteria line or in the vending machine.