

Do I need to reduce my takeaways?

When was the last time you ordered a takeaway? How often do people order a takeaway on average? According to the Food Standards Agency survey about a third of people in the UK who were surveyed reported eating a takeaway once a week.

Although there are no standard definitions, takeaways can be described as a meal that is ordered from and cooked by a restaurant or a shop and is taken away to be eaten at home or elsewhere. These meals represent a convenient and sometimes cheaper alternative to home cooked meals, because they are ready to be eaten within minutes. Some reasons why takeaway consumption has increased in recent years could be that we lack time to cook or haven't got the necessary cooking skills and that ordering a meal is easier due to advances in technology.

It may not surprise you that scientific research has confirmed that higher consumption of takeaway foods is a major contributor to obesity, diabetes and higher blood glucose levels, possibly because they are often higher in refined carbohydrates, saturated fats and salt.



However, that doesn't mean a meal from your favourite takeaway has to be completely off the table. The next time you order, it can be helpful to think outside the box. Rather than going for the usual, check what options there are to boost the nutritional value of your meal. Here are some tips on how to make healthy choices when choosing takeaways:

- Choose a thin-crust pizza over a thick-crust
- Swap white rice for brown, basmati or whole barley rice
- Opt for a grilled chicken salad wrap or something similar instead of a hamburger
- Pick oven baked wedges or sweet potato wedges over chips
- Have a side salad or a portion of vegetables
- Try to avoid foods that have been fried or are covered in sauce or gravy
- Choose sugar-free drinks or water
- Share large portions with friends or family and add a salad
- Include only one starchy carb in your meal, e.g., chips OR rice, not both

Remember that takeaways are not solely responsible for causing obesity or diabetes and other health complications. Aim for an overall balanced and nutritious diet, try to incorporate physical activity that you enjoy and promote positive mental health. With these habits in place, you can enjoy the occasional takeaway.

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References

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