It can be hard to start eating right when you’re accustomed to having large portions. Even though you may be trying to be healthy, you may not realize that certain bad eating habits at home can really add up. Do you have any of the following bad habits? Read over the list and put a check mark (√) next to any bad eating habits that you recognize as your personal bad habits. Then, think up ways to avoid these diet pitfalls. Your tips can be anything, just as long as they help you remember to keep your portion sizes down. Be creative!

☐ **BAD HABIT 1:** Eating straight out of the package, box or bag.
How to break this bad habit:

☐ **BAD HABIT 2:** Snacking throughout the day.
How to break this bad habit:

☐ **BAD HABIT 3:** Taking huge helpings at the dinner table.
How to break this bad habit:

☐ **BAD HABIT 4:** Always nibbling while you’re doing homework or watching television.
How to break this bad habit:

☐ **BAD HABIT 5:** Eating too fast.
How to break this bad habit:

Now, compare your ideas to the *Tips for Eating Smart at Home* fact sheet. Did you think of anything that isn’t on the fact sheet?
Even if you know how to control your portions at home, you might still be tempted to overeat when you’re at a restaurant. Many restaurants serve gigantic portions that could easily feed two or even three adults. Plus, when you add in an appetizer or dessert, you end up with way too much food. People tend to eat more when there is a lot of food in front of them, even if they are not really hungry, so restaurant portions can be a real challenge for a healthy eater.

Imagine you are going out to dinner with some friends who don’t have the best eating habits. Think of ways that you can get around the common restaurant portion problems that your friends suggest. What will you say and do to make sure you have a healthy meal?

**THEY SAY:** “Let’s go to that new all-you-can-eat buffet!”

**YOU SAY:**

**THEY SAY:** “The largest size is the best value for your money.”

**YOU SAY:**

**THEY SAY:** “Get another glass of soda! The refills are free.”

**YOU SAY:**

**THEY SAY:** “It all looks so good! Let’s order an appetizer, a side dish, an entrée, and dessert.”

**YOU SAY:**

**THEY SAY:** “I can’t believe I ate the entire meal!”

**YOU SAY:**

Now, compare your ideas to those on the *Tips for Eating Smart at Restaurants* fact sheet. Did you think of anything that isn’t on the list of tips?
Avoid the buffet
If you’re at a restaurant with an all-you-can-eat buffet, order food from the menu instead. If you must order from the buffet, limit yourself. Decide ahead of time how many platefuls you will eat, take small portions, and look over all of your options before you start taking food.

Don’t fall for the fast-food “bargain”
It may seem like a good value to buy the large or the extra-large fries or soda because it only costs a few cents more, but what about the value of your health? Always buy the small or medium size; you’ll be cutting calories and fat and you will most likely be fully satisfied. Take a look at the Kids’ Meal menu, too!

Order water
When a restaurant offers free refills, you may end up drinking a lot of soda. Order water instead and you won’t have to worry about drinking too much sugar or too many calories. If you do order soda, choose the sugar-free variety.

Don’t go overboard
It’s tempting to try several different items from the menu, but think of all the food you eat when you order an appetizer, side dishes, and a dessert to go with your meal. Limit yourself to one extra item per visit, or split an appetizer or a dessert among several people. Also, take a look at the Appetizer section and the Children’s Menu choices—the amount of food might be just right for you!

Cut portions in half
Restaurants often give giant portions, and people tend to overeat when they dine out because so much food is put in front of them. Split an entrée with a friend or take half of your food home—you’ll be saving money too!

Don’t be afraid to ask
Restaurant waiters are usually glad to help you eat healthfully. Ask your server which low-fat or low-calorie items he or she recommends. Ask if you can order a healthier version of a dish (by taking off cheese or bacon or by substituting steamed vegetables for fries). Ask if you can have your salad dressing on the side.

Slow down
It takes several minutes for your stomach to signal to your brain that you are full. Eat slowly and pay attention to your body’s hunger cues.