

dining out on a diet

We've all been there before. You start a strict diet and then attend a social event to find nothing but deep-fried hors d'oeuvres. Never fear as help is at hand.



FOR most of us, living and working in the inner city means networking functions, dinner parties and lots of eating out.

If you're determined to get smarter about what you eat and are scared to tackle the social outing or restaurant date for fear of breaking your pact, dietitian Desi Carlos, of Upper Mt Gravatt's Tree of Life Nutrition Services, has some sensible eating tips to offer.

"Most of us eat out two or three times a week – it's just a sign of the times," says Desi, pictured. "Eating healthy while out can still be enjoyable.

"Plan ahead and try to choose restaurants that serve a wide variety of foods. You can also have a light snack before you go out to help satisfy your hunger.

"Try to limit alcohol to one or two glasses and choose low-

joule soft drinks, water or soda water as beverages.

"Not only can you take the dedicated driver's seat with confidence, you can avoid any nasty hangovers and remember all the great conversation at the table."

A Coorparoo resident, Desi graduated from QUT in 1989 as a clinical dietician and has since worked as a locum at the PA and Princes Charles hospitals and on the Gold Coast.

She says two major events in the early '90s led to the creation of Tree of Life, which now has satellite practices at Morningside, Carina and Annerley among others – the death of her sister to lupus and a Federal Government grant.

"We are the second fattest nation in the world," she says. "(At Tree of Life) we try to offer real solutions. We really listen, we set realistic goals and make changes for life."

Tree of Life is at Garden City Medical Centre, cnr Logan and Kessels roads, Upper Mt Gravatt. Phone 3891 6199. ▶

DESI'S ADVICE FOR EATING OUT

HORS D'OEUVRES

- Choose vegetables (eg. carrot and celery sticks)
- Try salsa/tomato-based dips instead of creamy dips
- Try pretzels or rice crackers instead of potato crisps
- Stand away from the food table to help resist temptation

ENTREES

- Choose vegetable, minestrone or tomato-based soups and avoid any cream or butter and flour-based varieties

- Salads are a good choice. You can always ask for dressing to be served on the side
- Try a small serve of pasta in tomato-based sauce
- Avoid foods that are either fried or served with lashings of butter or margarine.
- Octopus, prawns, squid, oysters, lobster and crab can also be good choices

MAIN MEALS

- Choose grilled, poached or steamed meats

- Choose pasta with neapolitana, marinara or vegetable-based sauces
- Choose barbecue meats served with salad and bread
- Ask for extras – sauces, butters, gravy and dressings – on the side or not at all

DESSERTS

- Fresh fruits are best but skip the cream if possible
- Choose fruit sorbets or gelati
- Avoid cream and chocolate-based desserts