
News Release

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MEDIA ADVISORY

Can You Have Your Deep-Fried Butter & Eat It Too? Mayo Expert Weighs in on State Fair Food

ROCHESTER, Minn. — It's state fair time in much of the country, and that means plenty of intriguing people watching, enjoying amusement rides, games and live music and, in nearly every scenario, eating a hearty amount of less-than-healthy food.

How unhealthy? State fair food booths are famous for deep-frying most anything — even butter — and it's not unusual for a single serving to hit 500 or even 1,000 [calories](#), with dozens of grams of [fat](#).

As unlikely as it may sound, it is possible to get a taste of a state fair without overindulging, says [Donald Hensrud](#), M.D., a Mayo Clinic specialist in [nutrition](#) and preventive medicine.

“There is no question that the food at state fairs is not usually health supporting,” Dr. Hensrud says. “However, it's important to remember it is possible to eat sensibly and still have a good time with family and friends.”

Some tips from Dr. Hensrud:

- Give yourself a good start and eat something healthy before you go. Have some fruit to start the day or a salad before you go in the afternoon.
- Work off the extra calories through walking — easy to do at the fair.
- Burn off extra calories by getting in an extra workout or two, before or after the fair.
- Decide ahead of time how much and what you'll indulge in. If you have a plan, you're less likely to overeat.
- Split portions with family or friends. This will not only help decrease calorie intake, but also lets you enjoy more tastes and may help to save money.
- Go for quality and new tastes instead of quantity.
- When you're full, stop eating, even if you have some food left. The extra calories you get from being a member of the 'clean plate club' have no health benefit. The time to be frugal is before you take food — once you've taken it, it's OK to toss it when you're full.
- If you're drinking alcohol, have a drink of water between drinks.
- Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated and aid the digestive process.
- Try and stay away from non-diet soda. It's loaded with calories and sugar and has no nutritional benefit. Drink water instead.

- Avoid too many deep-fried foods.
- Don't panic if you overindulge. Return to your normal eating routine the following day.

To interview Dr. Hensrud about eating sensibly at state fairs, contact Nick Hanson at newsbureau@mayo.edu or 507-284-5005.

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