



For **more protein but less fat**, have skinless chicken breast with plain rice or porridge

One way to truly experience Singapore's multicultural diversity is to walk through a hawker centre or food court. Here, you are bound to find cuisine inspired by the various ethnic groups: Chinese, Malay and Indian. According to **Elisa Mak, Dietitian, JurongHealth**, eating out often poses more barriers to eating healthily because of 4 Cs: Culture, Constraint, Convenience and Cost.

For one, many food vendors prepare foods based on established tradition or routine rather than the knowledge of healthy nutrition. This may mean unconsciously using more oil or seasoning, making food higher in fat, salt and calories. Another reason, said Ms Mak, is time constraint, **"When you are in a hurry, fast food may be more convenient or you may choose your meal based on where the shortest queue is – not necessarily the healthiest one. Busy people may also skip meals and snack on convenience food – often fried snacks or sugary buns – leading to unwanted calories."**

Sometimes, our food options may also be due to convenience. Having dry-style noodles – an option higher in calories than the soup version – is often preferred because the soupy form is often more uncomfortable to eat in our humid weather. Cost is the fourth issue. **"We all try to save money and go for the cheapest options when eating out and sometimes those options may not be the healthiest,"** Ms Mak added.

Healthy hawker eats

In a food paradise like Singapore, with convenient and affordable food options, eating out is a way of life

Here are some ways to make better choices By Louisa Foo

IN CONSULTATION WITH ELISA MAK, DIETITIAN



Ditch roti prata for **fibre-rich** chapatti or thosai. Ask for dhal and tomato chutney instead of creamy curry or coconut chutney



Choose **rice-based noodles in clear soup** rather than fried, dry or gravy laden options. Fresh fish noodles, wonton noodles or yong tau foo without fried items are light, healthier choices



Instead of fried noodles, opt for congee without fried shallots for a **low-fat, but comforting** breakfast



Trim the fat with a bowl of mee soto instead of mee rebus or mee goreng

End your meal with something **sweet, but light.** Choose cheng tng or soya bean curd with less sugar syrup

