

Enjoying a meal out with others is a great way to connect and add enjoyment to someone's life. However, a person with vision loss may have questions and uncertainty about how to eat with confidence when dining at a restaurant with other people.

Below are a few tips and suggestions that may be helpful and can be tailored to meet an individual's needs.

Locate Food Using the Clock Method

Knowing where your food is located on the plate can be extremely helpful. Think of your plate as a clock face with 12:00 at the edge furthest from you and 6:00 at the edge closest to you. This will allow others to help you identify where food is found on your plate. For example, if your chicken is at the edge of the plate furthest from you, someone would tell you it was at 12:00.

Skills and Tips for Eating

- If you have low vision, try using – or bringing – a high-contrast place setting. For example: Use a dark place mat with a light plate and cup.
- Use a tray or placemat to help navigate your dining space and help you be aware of the placement of the dishes and utensils within that space.
- Periodically, use a fork or knife tip to check the location and arrangement of food on your plate.
- If you're pouring liquids, place an index finger over the rim of the cup. Pour the liquid until you feel it contact the tip of your finger. Stop pouring as the liquid is about one inch from the rim. (Please note: This technique should only be used with cold liquids. For hot beverages, use a liquid level indicator – a device that makes noise when liquid touches it.)
- Identify the difference between the salt and pepper shakers. Saltshakers often have larger holes than pepper shakers, and salt has a different sound when shaken because the texture is different than pepper. For instance, salt sounds "looser" and more granular than pepper.
- Ask your server for a large-print or braille menu, if available.

Useful Assistive Technology and Apps

Smartphones or Tablets: Use the built-in camera or magnifier utilities found on most tablets and phones to view and enlarge a menu or items on your plate.

Handheld Video Magnifiers: These are small, lightweight devices that use a camera and small LED screen to magnify text, like a menu, and objects.

Seeing AI or Envision AI Apps: These apps use artificial intelligence (AI) and smartphone or tablet cameras to identify text, people and objects. Then they audibly describe them to the user.

Aira or BeMyEyes: These apps connect blind and low vision people with sighted volunteers and company representatives for visual assistance through live video calls.

Vibrating Liquid Level Indicator: Never worry about overfilling your glass. This device hangs on the side of the glass and will notify you when the liquid level nears the top.