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By Katie Rosenbrock

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Have you ever ordered a salad or declined dessert only to be teased or ridiculed by a friend or family member?

Anyone who's ever been in a similar situation knows it can be frustrating and even downright infuriating. It's hard to embrace a [healthier lifestyle](#) when it feels like everyone around you is mocking or scoffing at your efforts.

Not to mention, it can be difficult to come up with an adequate response without sounding defensive or condescending.

Handling comments, remarks and questions about your healthy choices can sometimes pose a challenge, but by arming yourself with the following expert tips, next time you're teased for being healthy,



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you'll know exactly what to say.

Understand where your friend or family member is coming from.

“Understand that sometimes, when you're being teased, it's because the person teasing you is threatened by what it is you're doing—in this case, living healthfully,” explains April Masini, author of four relationship advice books and the advice column, [Ask April](#). “Your healthy lifestyle may make them feel badly about themselves and the way they're living, but instead of changing their own behaviors, they lash out by making fun of you.” Recognizing this first can help you to feel less threatened.

Keep an eye out for patterns.

“If someone makes a comment for the first time, it might be considered an innocent, though tasteless, joke,” says [Sharon Palmer](#), R.D.N., The Plant-Powered Dietitian and author of “*Plant-Powered for Life*.” “Anything more than one teasing or annoying comment is a pattern and should be viewed as such.”

If it's a onetime incident, Palmer suggests you simply take the high road.

“Whatever is said to you, never stoop to another person's level, but maintain your integrity. The best way to approach the issue is to remain proud of what you've done and are doing,” she explained. “Never let that that proud feeling go. You may choose to view someone's comment as a testament to your achievements or recognize that they're impressed with your progress. That way you can take the high road, understanding that someone wants to be like you, even when they're trying to tear you down.”

But if you notice it's a repetitive occurrence, Palmer suggests speaking with the person privately to let them know how you feel.

“If the comments are repeated, it's time to take the speaker aside and let him or her know how you feel about teasing comments—that they have an edge, don't feel like compliments and don't seem supportive.”

Plan a venting session, if needed.

“Let someone know when you're about to head into a social situation with potential teasing and text that person,” says Jennifer Strait, a body image coach and creator of the [Body Image ReBoot](#) series of workshops, classes and coaching. “Vent, text what crazy rude thing someone said to you, ask for encouragement—have someone who honors your new way of eating and changes to keep you sane in challenging situations.”

Don't get defensive.

“As tempting as it can be to shout something like, 'Yes, it's true, I'm eating healthier...you should try it,' or 'Obviously, eating vegetables is a foreign concept to you,' please don't say it,” says Strait. “The teasing offenders will only become more entrenched in their views because they don't think what they're saying is rude or diminishing.”

Michelle Collier, an ACE certified personal trainer and owner of [Performance Fitness](#) in Pennsylvania, adds, “Getting in an argument or

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getting defensive with this type of person is seldom productive. It's better to ignore their comment or assure them that you're doing what is best for you and that it has nothing to do with them."

"It's also important to remain positive about your way of eating, Collier said. "Being negative or talking about what you can't eat because your being 'healthy' only gives a potentially teasing friend a window."

If you're teased, she suggests responding with: "I just don't feel good when I eat that."

"It's a guaranteed win. No one can tell you how a food makes you feel, that's why the statement is so effective" Collier explained.

A few more expert-suggested responses:

"I'm committed to eating well to feel healthy, strong and look my best."

"My doctor is concerned about my [X] so I'm trying to eat healthier and see if it makes a difference."

"I got sick and tired of feeling sick and tired. Right now I actually feel better when I eat healthier."

"I know it's different from how I used to eat, but I've already lost [x] pounds."

"I think I have a ways to go before I turn into a health guru. Right now, I'm just not eating [x]."

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