

Nutrition Labeling at Fast-Food and Other Chain Restaurants

Menu labeling would allow Americans to exercise personal responsibility and make informed choices for a growing part of their diets

- **Consumers have a right to information.** Companies are required to provide information on the fuel-efficiency of cars, what clothes are made of, care instructions for clothing, and energy and water consumption of certain home appliances.
 - A labeling requirement at chain restaurants is even more compelling. People need nutrition information to manage their weight and reduce the risk of or manage heart disease, diabetes, or high blood pressure, which are leading causes of death and high health-care costs.

Nutrition labeling allows consumers to make informed choices

- **Without nutrition information, it is difficult to compare options and make informed decisions.**
- Since 1994, the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act (NLEA) has required food manufacturers to provide nutrition information on nearly all packaged foods. **Three-quarters of adults report using nutrition labels on packaged food** and using labels is associated with eating more healthful diets.
- Studies show that providing nutrition information at restaurants can help people make lower calorie choices. In New York City, **82% say menu labeling has affected their food choices.**
 - Those who have made ordering changes have looked for and ordered lower calorie alternatives (71%) or stopped ordering certain items (51%).
- **People want nutrition information from restaurants;** 78% of Americans support menu labeling.

Americans eat out more than ever before

- American adults and children consume on average **one third of their calories from eating out.**
- In 1970, Americans spent just 26% of their food dollars on restaurant meals and other foods prepared outside their homes. **Today, we spend almost half (48%) of our food dollars on away-from-home foods.**
- On a typical day, more than 130 million individuals eat out, which will add up to more than 70 billion meal and snack occasions in 2009.

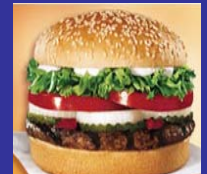
Who Would Guess...



... a large chocolate shake at McDonald's has 500 more calories than a whole meal of a hamburger, small fries, and a small Coke.



... at Starbucks a Grande Caffé Latte (130 calories) has 620 fewer calories than a Venti Strawberry and Crème Frappuccino (750 calories).



... a Burger King Tendercrisp Chicken Sandwich (790 calories) has 120 more calories than a Whopper (670 calories).

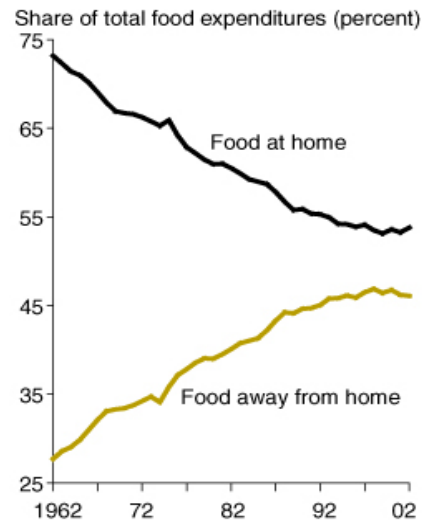
... one slice of carrot cake at the Cheesecake Factory has $\frac{3}{4}$ of a day's calories (1,560 calories).



Calorie content is the nutrition information most relevant to obesity

- Obesity is one of the most pressing health problems in the United States. **Over the last 25 years, obesity rates doubled among U.S. adults and tripled in children and teens.** Overweight and obesity affect the majority of American adults (66%).
 - While calories are not the only nutrition information important to health, they are the nutrition information relevant to obesity.
 - **Studies link eating out with obesity and higher caloric intakes.** Children eat almost twice as many calories when they eat a meal at a restaurant compared to a meal at home.

Americans are eating out more



Source: Food Consumption (Per Capita) Data System, USDA, Economic Research Service.

Menu labeling promotes nutritional improvements in restaurant foods

HOT & *fresh* TOASTED

Subs From The Oven!

Cal		6" Sub or Wrap
560	Meatball Marinara	2.99
450	Italian B.M.T.*	3.69
480	Spicy Italian	3.29
400	Steak & Cheese	4.29
380	Subway Melt*	3.69
580	Chicken & Bacon Ranch	3.69

Hungrier? Make it a FOOTLONG!



Italian B.M.T.

- Menu labeling allows restaurants to reevaluate menus, find calorie savings, and create new, lower calorie options.
 - A comparison of menu items in New York City before (March 2007) and after (June 2008) calorie posting requirements went into effect shows decreases in calories in many items.
 - Cosi switched to low-fat mayonnaise on the Cosi Club, bringing the calories down from 800 cals to 450 cals; and on their Signature Salad they switched to reduced-fat dressing and half the cheese, reducing calories from 610 cals to 370 cals.

The National Academies' Institute of Medicine recommends that restaurant chains "provide calorie content and other key nutrition information on menus and packaging that is prominently visible at point of choice and use." The Food and Drug Administration, Surgeon General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Cancer Institute, and American Medical Association also recommend providing nutrition information at restaurants.

For more information, contact the Center for Science in the Public Interest at 202-777-8358 or acorbett@cspinet.org or visit www.menulabeling.org