

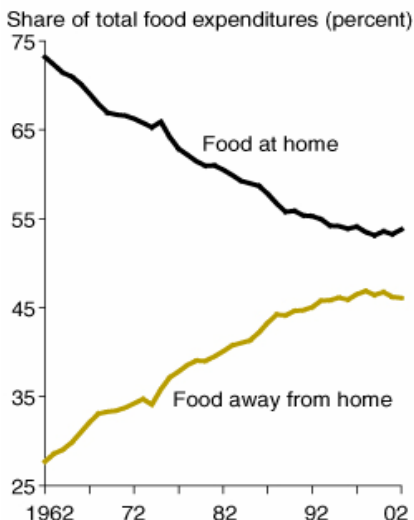
Nutrition Labeling at Fast-Food and Other Chain Restaurants

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, disability, and high health-care costs.
- **People want nutrition information from restaurants.** 83% of Americans want restaurants to provide nutrition information, such as calories.
- **Half of large chain restaurants do not provide *any* nutrition information to their customers.**
- **Without nutrition information, it is difficult to compare options and make informed decisions.**
- **The average American eats out four meals a week; that is enough to lead to over-consuming calories not just on the day the person eats out, but also to exceed calorie requirements over the course of a whole week.**

One order of cheese fries with ranch dressing contains 3,010 calories, a large movie theater popcorn with “butter” topping has over 1,600 calories, and a café mocha and pastry from Starbucks provides over 1,000 calories.

Americans are eating out more



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

Menu Labeling Is One Important Way to Address Obesity/Nutrition

- American adults and children consume on average **one third of their calories from eating out.**
- **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.

Who Would Guess...



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



... at Starbucks you could end up with 130 calories in a grande Caffé Latte or 750 calories in a venti Strawberry and Crème Frappuccino.



...a Burger King Tendercrisp Chicken Sandwich (790 calories) has 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).



- When **eating out, people eat more saturated fat and fewer nutrients**, such as calcium and fiber, than at home.
- Since 1994, the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act (NLEA) has required food manufacturers to provide nutrition information on nearly all packaged foods. However, NLEA explicitly exempts restaurants.
- 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.



Nutrition information must be on the menu to be useful

Restaurants that provide nutrition information generally do so in ways that are not visible to customers when ordering. They use:

- Websites, which require computers and Internet access before going out to eat;
- Tray liners or fast-food packages, which are not visible to customers until after they order;
- Brochures and posters; one study found that less than 8% of customers saw the nutrition information in chain restaurants that provided it.

Menu labeling is likely to spur nutritional improvements in restaurant foods

- A key benefit of mandatory nutrition labeling on packaged foods has been the reformulation of existing products and the introduction of new nutritionally improved products.
 - Trans fat labeling on packaged food led many companies to reformulate their products to remove trans fat.

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" (2006). 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.