

Nutrition Labeling at Restaurants, Supermarkets & Other Food Service Establishments

Congress passed a national law in March 2010 requiring calories to be posted on menus, menu boards, and for food on display at restaurants, supermarkets, convenience stores, and other food service establishments with 20 or more outlets [21 U.S.C. 343(q)(5)(H)].

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

People want nutrition information from food service establishments: **over 80% of Americans support menu labeling in chain restaurants, including pizza chains, and chain supermarkets and convenience stores, across all political parties.**¹

Eating out is a big and problematic part of Americans' diets

Americans consume, on average, one-third of their calories from eating out.² Studies link eating out with obesity and higher caloric intakes.³

Children typically eat more than twice (55%) as many calories when they eat a meal at a restaurant compared to a meal at home.⁴ **When eating out, people eat more saturated fat and fewer nutrients**, such as calcium and fiber, than at home.^{2,3}

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.

SIGNATURE SIDES			
	REG CAL	LG CAL	
RED BEANS & RICE	230	680	
COLE SLAW	220	570	
CAJUN FRIES	260	770	REG \$2.39
MASHED POTATOES	110	450	
GREEN BEANS	40	120	LG \$4.29
CAJUN RICE	170	450	
ONION RINGS	280	560	
CORN ON THE COB	190	380	

BISCUITS			
(1) \$.89	260	(6) \$4.99	1560
(12) \$7.99	3120		



Without nutrition information, it is difficult to compare options and make informed decisions.

2,000 calories per day is used for general nutrition advice. Who would guess...

Large movie theater popcorn from Regal Cinema without "buttery" topping has over 1,200 cals and 60 g (three days' worth) of saturated fat



A regular order of cheese fries with ranch dressing from Outback Steakhouse contains almost 1,800 cals

A pecan roll from Panera (740 cal) has almost double the calories of a chocolate pastry (410 cal)

Subway's Chicken and Bacon Ranch Melt contains 190 calories more than the Steak & Cheese



A side order of jalapeno corn bread from Chili's has 690 cals, a side order of fries has 390 cals

A grande hot chocolate from Starbucks contains 320 cals while a cappuccino contains 120 cals



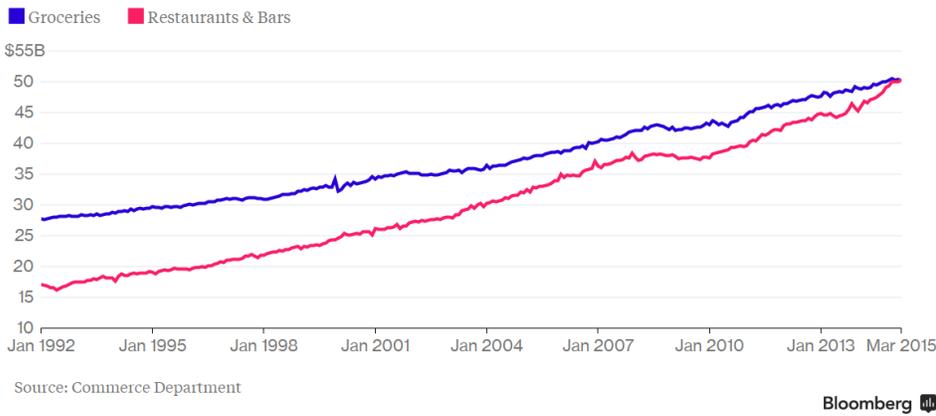
A regular oriental chicken salad from Applebee's contains 1,400 cals while the Bourbon Street Chicken and Shrimp contains 620 cals



A fresh turkey sandwich from 7-Eleven has 560 cals while a 5 oz red hot beef burrito contains 340 cals

Pass the Menu, Please

Spending on dining out has overtaken grocery store purchases for the first time ever



In March 2015, **sales at restaurants and bars surpassed spending at grocery stores for the first time**, making it half of food dollars spent.⁵

On a typical day, 33% of children, 41% of adolescents, and 36% of adults eat at a fast-food restaurant.⁶

A health impact assessment from Los Angeles County estimated that **menu labeling could avert 40% of the 6.75 million pound average annual weight gain** in the county (population aged 5 years and older).⁷

Menu labeling

Though not all studies are able to measure an effect of menu labeling, many show that providing nutrition information at restaurants can help people make lower calorie choices and spur the reformulation of existing food items and the introduction of nutritionally improved items. A 2018 review of nearly 30 studies from the well-respected Cochrane Collaboration found that menu labeling helps people reduce their calories by about 50 calories per meal, on average.⁸ **Keeping in mind that the obesity epidemic is explained by about a 200 calorie per day imbalance,**⁹ such a change could have a meaningful impact on public health.

- A New York City study found **15% of customers reported using menu labeling and purchased 106 fewer calories in a fast-food lunch** than customers who did not see or use the calorie information.¹⁰
- A study conducted in New York City Starbucks restaurants found that menu labeling had little effect on beverage calories, but reduced calories in food purchases by 14%.¹¹ **Together, this is a 6% decrease in calories on average per transaction. This would mean a 30 calorie per person per day decrease in intake population-wide, slightly less than the meta-analysis from the Cochrane Collaboration.** For people buying more calories, the effect was bigger, a 26% decrease.
- In a restaurant study conducted in Philadelphia, displaying calorie and nutrient labels next to all food-item descriptions and prices resulted in **an average purchase of 151 fewer calories, 224 mg less sodium, and 4 g less saturated fat** relative to unlabeled sites.¹²
- Parents of children 3–6 years old presented with a McDonald's menu with calorie labeling **ordered an average of 100 fewer calories for their children** than did parents who did not receive calorie information.¹³
- A study in King County, Washington found a **significant decrease in calories (41 calories) in entrée items** at 37 chain restaurants after implementation of menu labeling.¹⁴
- From 2012 to 2013, **newly introduced menu items in the largest U.S. restaurants were 56 calories lower on average** (a decline of 12%).¹⁵
- Between spring 2010 and spring 2011, **fast-food restaurants decreased children's menu entrees by 40 calories.**¹⁶
- Between the years of 2005 and 2011, **healthier food options increased from 13% to 20%** at five fast-food chains subject to menu labeling.¹⁷



For more information, contact the Center for Science in the Public Interest at 202-777-8352 or policy@cspinet.org or visit www.menulabeling.org.

Updated May 2018

References

- ¹ Center for Science in the Public Interest. Poll conducted by Caravan ORC. Sample of 1,007 adults conducted January 18-21, 2018.
- ² Todd J, et al. The Impact of Food Away from Home on Adult Diet Quality USDA, 2010. Accessed at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/136609/err90_1_.pdf>.
- ³ Center for Science in the Public Interest. Research Review: Effects of Eating Out on Nutrition and Body Weight, updated October 2008. Accessed at <http://cspinet.org/new/pdf/lit_rev-eating_out_and_obesity.pdf>.
- ⁴ Zoumas-Morse C, et al. Children's Patterns of Macronutrient Intake and Associations with Restaurant and Home Eating. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 2001, vol. 101, pp. 923-925.
- ⁵ Jamrisko M. Americans' Spending on Dining out Just Overtook Grocery Sales for the First Time Ever. *Bloomberg Business*, April 14, 2015. Accessed at <<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-04-14/americans-spending-on-dining-out-just-overtook-grocery-sales-for-the-first-time-ever>>.
- ⁶ Powell NM, et al. Energy Intake from Restaurants: Demographics and Socioeconomics, 2003-2008. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, 2012, vol. 43, no. 5, pp. 498-504.
- ⁷ Kuo T, et al. Menu Labeling as a Potential Strategy for Combating the Obesity Epidemic: A Health Impact Assessment. *American Journal of Public Health*, 2009, vol. 9, no. 9, pp.1680-1686.
- ⁸ Crockett RA, et al. Nutritional Labelling for Healthier Food or Non-Alcoholic Drink Purchasing and Consumption. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2018, Issue 2. Accessed at <<https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD009315.pub2>>.
- ⁹ Hall KD, et al. Quantification of the Effect of Energy Imbalance on Bodyweight. *Lancet*, 2011, vol. 378, pp. 826-837.
- ¹⁰ Dumanovsky T, et al. Changes in Energy Content of Lunchtime Purchases from Fast Food Restaurants after Introduction of Calorie Labeling: Cross Sectional Customer Surveys. *British Medical Journal*, 2011, vol. 343, d4464. doi: 10.1136/bmj.d4464.
- ¹¹ Bollinger B, et al. Calorie Posting in Chain Restaurants. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, 2011, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 91-128.
- ¹² Auchincloss A, et al. Customer Responses to Mandatory Menu Labeling May Lead to Lower-Calorie Restaurant Meal Choices for Children. *Pediatrics*, 2010, vol. 125, no. 2, pp. 244-248.
- ¹³ Tandon PS, et al. Nutrition Calorie Labeling May Lead to Lower-Calorie Restaurant Meal Choices for Children. *Pediatrics*, 2010, vol. 125, no. 2, pp. 244-248.
- ¹⁴ Bruemmer B, et al. Energy, Saturated Fat, and Sodium were Lower in Entrees at Chain Restaurants at 18 Months Compared with 6 Months Following the Implementation of Mandatory Menu Labeling Regulation in King County, Washington. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 2012, vol. 112, no. 8, pp. 1169-1176.
- ¹⁵ Bleich SN, et al. Calorie Changes in Chain Restaurant Menu Items: Implications for Obesity and Evaluations of Menu Labeling. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, 2015, vol. 48, no. 1, pp. 70-75.
- ¹⁶ Wu HW, Sturm R. Changes in the Energy and Sodium Content of Main Entrees in US Chain Restaurants from 2010 to 2011. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 2014, vol. 114, no. 2, pp. 209-219.
- ¹⁷ Namba A, et al. Exploratory Analysis of Fast-Food Chain Restaurant Menus Before and After Implementation of Local Calorie-Labeling Policies, 2005-2011. *Preventing Chronic Disease*, 2013, vol. 10, E101. doi: 10.5888/pcd10.120224.