

Eating Well While Eating Out:

How calories on the menu can help guide healthy choices

KEY POINTS

- Eating away from home is an intrinsic part of today's lifestyle
- While calories from away from meals have increased over time, the majority of calories still come from "at home" consumption
- Restaurant meals tend to be higher in calories, fat and sodium but research demonstrates away from home meals can fit into a healthy lifestyle
- The intent of FDA's menu labeling regulation is to inform consumers
- The regulation applies to chain restaurants and "similar retail food establishments" with 20 or more locations
- December 1, 2016 is the compliance date
- The regulation includes a myriad of rules to ensure calorie labeling is "clear & conspicuous" for the consumer
- Consumers generally have a positive perception of menu labeling but education will be critical to help consumers use the calories they see
- Keep messages positive and personal

RESOURCES

More about the regulation

- FCP has a self-study module
- <http://www.fda.gov/Food/IngredientsPackagingLabeling/LabelingNutrition/ucm217762.htm>

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- Calorie Confusion: a review of the literature
- Communicating Calories: consumer tested messages about menu labeling
- Menu Makeover: Putting the Calories You See On the Menu to Use : a turnkey consumer handout
- Eating Well While Eating Out: A Toolkit for Healthcare Professionals