

Eating Out and Eating Healthy – Just Got Easier

In today's busy world, Americans eat and drink about one-third of their calories from foods prepared away from home. In general, these foods provide more calories, sodium, and saturated fat than meals consumed at home. For the average adult, eating one meal away from home each week translates to roughly 2 extra pounds each year. Over the course of 5 years, that's 10 extra pounds.

Calorie labeling on menus can help you make informed and healthful decisions about meals and snacks. So, beginning May 7, 2018, calories have been listed on many menus and menu boards of restaurants and other food establishments that are part of a chain of 20 or more locations. This will help you know your options and make it easier to eat healthy when eating out.

Here are 3 steps for making dining out choices that are healthy and delicious:



1. Find Out Your Calorie Needs

Knowing your calorie needs is important to managing your daily food and beverage choices. You can use 2,000 calories a day as a guide, but your calorie needs may vary based on your age, sex, and physical activity level. To find out **your** specific calorie needs, use the Estimated Calorie Needs table at www.fda.gov/caloriesonthemenu.



2. Look for Calorie and Nutrition Information

You may have noticed calorie information on some menus or menu boards. Or maybe you have seen nutrition information on restaurant websites or on phone apps. This information can help you make informed and healthful meal and snack choices.

Where will I see the calories?

Calories are listed next to the name or price of the food or beverage on menus and menu boards, including drive-thru windows, and may be at the following types of chains:

- Chain restaurants
- Chain coffee shops
- Bakeries
- Ice cream shops
- Self-service food locations, such as buffets and salad bars
- Movie theaters
- Amusement parks
- Grocery/convenience stores

Where will I NOT see calorie information?

- Foods sold at deli counters and typically intended for further preparation
- Foods purchased in bulk in grocery stores, such as loaves of bread from the bakery section
- Bottles of liquor displayed behind a bar
- Food in transportation vehicles, such as food trucks, airplanes, and trains
- Food on menus in elementary, middle, and high schools that are part of U.S. Department of Agriculture's National School Lunch Program
- Restaurants and other establishments that are not part of a chain of 20 or more

What about meals with multiple options?

When a menu item is available in different flavors or varieties (for example, vanilla and chocolate ice cream), or includes an entrée with your choice of side items, such as a sandwich that comes with either chips, side salad, or fruit, the calorie amounts will be shown as follows:

Two Choices

Calories are separated by a slash
(for example 250/350 calories)

Three or More Choices

Calories are shown in a range
(for example 150-300 calories)

Will information about other nutrients also be available?

In addition to calorie information, covered establishments are also required to provide written nutrition information such as saturated fat, sodium, and dietary fiber to consumers upon request. So, when eating out, don't hesitate to ask for more nutrition information if you need it.

3. Make the Best Choice for You

Eating healthy comes down to personal choices. Try these tips to help you make the best choices for you and your family.



Comparing calorie and nutrition information can help you make better decisions before you order.



Side dishes can add many calories to a meal. Steamed, grilled, or broiled vegetables and fruit are often lower-calorie options. With calorie information, you can make the best choice for you.



Calorie information can help you decide **how much to enjoy now** and how much to save for later.



Asking for sauces or salad dressings **on the side** lets you choose how much to use.



Foods described with words like creamy, fried, breaded, battered, or buttered are typically **higher in calories** than foods described as baked, roasted, steamed, grilled, or broiled. Use calorie information to help you make the choice that is right for you.



Calories from beverages can add up quickly. With calorie information, you can find lower-calorie options.