

Nutrition News

Department of Human Nutrition



September 2008

Dining Out Can be Healthy

Do the words “dining out” and “healthy” really go together? Yes! Restaurant industry partners have developed an online resource to help Americans more easily identify nutritious choices served at nearly 55,000 restaurants in all 50 states. This resource – www.HealthyDiningFinder.com – can help consumers find healthy menu options at every type of restaurant from fast-food to fine dining.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention promotes HealthyDiningFinder.com to encourage Americans to make healthier restaurant menu choices to help reduce the risk of obesity, cancer, diabetes and heart disease. Viewing nutrition information on the website can help consumers find healthy menu items with nutrition information for calories, fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrates, fiber sugars, protein and fruit/vegetables per cup. Healthy Dining professionals look for

restaurant menu choices that meet their criteria for calories, fat and saturated fat and feature lean protein, fruits and vegetables or 100% whole grains. Only the restaurant menu items that meet these criteria are included on the Healthy Dining site.

To find participating restaurants, visitors enter location information on the website by zip code or city. Optional searches include price range, take-out or delivery of meals. After pressing “submit,” visitors receive a list of restaurants that match the selected criteria. Nutrition information and featured menu options are located under each restaurant’s logo.

Consumers can plan their dining-out experience and make smart choices before arriving at the restaurant. More and more restaurants are contacting Healthy Dining about participating due to media coverage and response from industry and the general public.

CDC awarded Healthy Dining a grant to develop HealthyDiningFinder.com. To provide this ongoing service to consumers for free, participating restaurants pay a fee which covers the costs of operating and publicizing the website and program. Healthy Dining website has a note that explains the program and encourages consumers to talk with favorite local restaurants about becoming a part of Healthy Dining Finder.

The Healthy Dining Finder website will soon be enhanced with a new look, including added search functions, trans fat data, accessibility to mobile devices and more. National Restaurant Association’s research identified that nearly three out of four Americans say they are trying to eat more healthfully in restaurants than they did two years ago. Is your favorite restaurant listed on the Healthy Dining Finder?

References (accessed 9/17/08)
Food Business News June 24, 2008,
www.healthydiningfinder.com.

For more information about healthy eating, contact your local extension office.

The Food Assistance Program can help people of all ages with low income buy nutritious foods for a better diet.

To find out more, call toll-free 1-888-369-4777.

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Dining Out Can be Healthy; September 2008.

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