

Effective Strategies for Making Healthy Choices Easier When Eating Out

Children and adults regularly eat out, and their food and beverage choices affect their health and businesses in the community. The following strategies have been effective in helping customers make healthy choices when eating out and helping food service operators improve their business. Public health practitioners and food service operators can use the following strategies to work together to make healthy choices easier.

Program	Sample Setting	Description	Outcomes
Healthy Carry-outs	Carry-outs in low-income areas of Baltimore, Maryland	Identified healthier items using a green leaf symbol photos on menu. Added healthy sides and beverages.	Total revenue was greater compared to the control group. The number of customers increased by 36.8%.
Healthy messaging and price decreases	Deli-style restaurant in a business district with substantial base of repeat customers	Placed health messages on posters and reduced prices of healthy items.	The number of healthier items sold were higher than control items.
Healthy Options Program	Family-style chain restaurants in Northern California	Placed red hearts on menus next to items low in fat and cholesterol.	The proportion of targeted entrees sold significantly increased in 2 restaurants.
Adding and Promoting Healthy Options	Owner-operated full-service restaurants in rural Iowa	Listed healthy options and ways orders could be adjusted on plastic signs at tables.	34% of customers who noticed the signs said that it affected their order.
SmartMenu Program	Local restaurants in Pierce County, Washington	Analyzed restaurant recipes worked with restaurants to post nutrition information. Menus were healthier after information was posted.	20% of customers chose a low-calorie entrée after seeing the nutrition information.
Smart Choices	Concession stand of large high school in Muscatine, Iowa	Modified existing items, and introduced and displayed new items.	Increased average sales per varsity football game by 4%.
Healthy Chinese Take-Out Initiative	Chinese take-out restaurants in high-poverty areas in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	Reduced amount of sauce. Used low sodium, fresh, and non-salt ingredients (garlic, ginger, chilies) to add flavor.	Over 90% of customers said they would purchase the dish after the taste test. 52% of chefs/owners said it was easy to make low-salt changes.
Point-of-Purchase Health Messaging	Café-style restaurant in small town in the Netherlands	Included a plastic sheet with healthy entrees in the menu. Used health messaging on menu.	Chronic and current dieters increased choices for low-calorie foods; other customers were unaffected.

More information on the strategies can be found at dshs.texas.gov/Obesity/TXNEARstrategies/.

Example Pictures of Strategies

Healthy Chinese Take-out Initiative



Adopt new recipes for popular dishes.

Use less sauce for cooking.

Only give sauce packets on request.

Replace salt and sauce with flavors like ginger, chilies, scallions, garlic.

Healthy Carry-outs

Chicken Wings			Salads		
3 Wings	\$	\$	Garden Salad	\$	\$
4 Wings	\$	\$	Grilled Chicken Salad	\$	\$
5 Wings	\$	\$	Chef Salad	\$	\$
6 Wings	\$	\$			

Sides		Fish	
French Fries	Small Large	Lake Trout	
Western Fries	\$ \$	Small	\$
Onion Rings	\$ \$	Large	\$
Mozarella Sticks (5pc.)	\$		
Mini Crab Sticks (each)	\$		

Look for the leaf  for a fresh and delicious choice!

Cold Cut Sandwich



Grilled Chicken Sandwich



Garden Salad



Try these fresh options!

Healthy Options Program

Restaurant Name

Healthy Menu Options

- Low-fat salad dressing
- Low-fat milk
- Leave out one or more high-fat ingredients
- Smaller portions available on some items
- Meat/fish that is grilled or baked instead of fried
- Whole wheat bread and dinner rolls
- Toppings on the side
- Vegetable side options available

Ask your server for more information



Identifying Healthy Menu Options

Picture shows the ¡Por Vida! Program.



BREAKFAST

WAKE ME UP! BREAKFAST: \$7 Per Person
Scrambled eggs, home-style breakfast potatoes and flakey biscuits.
**Add cheese and garden veggies to scrambled eggs: \$2 per person
**Add Bacon or Sausage: \$2 per person

PANCAKES & EGGS BREAKFAST: \$8 Per Person
Hot Pancakes Served with Maple Syrup and Butter - Along with Scrambled Eggs and Breakfast Potatoes

Smart Choices

Like food?

Then you'll love our new concession items!

Check it out





We have added

- Apples
- Baby carrots w/ranch dressing
- Grilled chicken sandwiches
- Warm pretzels
- Dill pickles
- Trail mix
- Granola bars
- Apple juice
- Snack pretzels



SmartMenu Program

Spaghetti

Spaghetti pasta in a hearty meat sauce.

610 / 9 / 970 / 105

Calories / Fat / Sodium / Carbohydrates

Point-of-Purchase Health Messaging

Our Dish of the Day

Are you watching your weight? Then choose one of three salads; Different types of fresh lettuce, a variety of crunchy vegetables and salads, and our beloved home dressing with fresh herbs.

Meat: with bresaola, prosciutto and slices of apple and pear
OR
Fish: with different kinds of smoked fish and fresh dill and lemon
OR
Vegetarian: with soft goat cheese and honey, pieces of apple and pear and three kinds of nuts

All salads are served with fresh dark bread
Low in calories!