Menu Transparency Takes Effect And Consumers Eat It Up, Reports Mintel

Contributed by Mintel
Thursday, 01 July 2010

Menus around the US are in the process of getting a makeover.

The new health care bill will require all restaurants, with 20 or more locations, to include calorie counts on menus, menu boards and drive-thrus.

According to Mintelâ€™s latest research, more than 60% of restaurant-goers think restaurants should post nutritional information on menus, and two in five (44%) think federal or local governments should facilitate such actions.

â€œMenu transparency will allow consumers to have control over their food decisions with a complete understanding of what theyâ€™re eating,â€• notes Eric Giandelone, director of foodservice research at Mintel.

â€œHowever, getting people to eat healthier requires more than just posting calories or adding healthy options to the menuâ€¦the food also has to taste good.â€•

When going out for dinner, nearly 60% of survey respondents say they want something that tastes great and 23% claim to want to eat a healthy meal.

Only 14% of diners say they are never interested in ordering a healthy restaurant meal. This insight shows that restaurant patrons are attracted to healthful meals, as long as theyâ€™re full of flavor.

Nearly half of survey respondents report eating healthier in restaurants in the past year and people have different methods for doing so.

Reducing fat (67%) leads the way in strategies for adopting healthier eating habits at restaurants, followed by eating more fruits and vegetables (52%). Meanwhile, 49% of patrons are cutting calories by simply ordering less food.

â€œFrom a restaurantâ€™s perspective, there is a concern that healthy menu items may not sell, but there is also a danger to having a calorie-laden menu when the calorie count law starts taking effect,â€• adds Eric Giandelone. â€œThere may be some initial consumer shock at the calorie counts and chains may have to start listing lower-calorie options or smaller portion sizes to help diffuse this unpleasant surprise.â€•

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Source: Mintel Oxygen Reports

Chicago, USA - 16 June 2010