

# A 65% increase in US menu items with "healthy" claim added to restaurant menus

CHICAGO, US: Last month's recommendations from the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC) confirmed what Mintel's research and consumers have already been suggesting: restaurants need healthier menus. Many restaurants have already listened. Between Q2 2009 and Q2 2010 menu items labelled as "healthy" grew 65%, according to Mintel Menu Insights.



The DGAC recommendations also include specific instructions for kids' menus, urging restaurants to include a focus on children, as "prevention of obesity in childhood is the single most powerful public health approach to combating America's obesity epidemic." The 10% increase in menu items that contain fruits or vegetables between Q2 2007 and Q2 2010 reported by Mintel Menu Insights is a start, but restaurants still have a ways to go.

"Restaurants should start considering how they're going to make kids' menus healthier," says Eric Giandelone, director of foodservice research at Mintel. "It's important to get feedback from both parents and kids to provide a healthy balance on the menu that kids will want to eat and parents will approve of."

## You need your greens... and other colours too

Adults need their fruits and veggies just as much as children do and according to the DGAC, menus should provide it. Mintel research found that among restaurant-goers who say they're eating more healthfully when dining out, more than half are doing so by including more fruits and vegetables. There has also been a 12% increase in menu items that were labelled as vegetarian between Q2 2007 and Q2 2010.

"Healthy menu development opportunity exists in providing vegetable and seafood-based appetizers, soups, salads and entrees," notes Eric Giandelone. "An added bonus in offering these ingredients is if prepared thoughtfully, they will naturally cut down on the fat and calories of a menu item, making it a more favourable choice for their patrons."