

Using food labels can improve diet.<sup>i</sup> Since consumers are often unaware of the nutrient content of foods, having access to nutrition information while they are selecting their food helps them make an informed, healthy choice<sup>ii</sup>. Targeted, strategic placement of nutrition messages can also affect purchasing.<sup>iii</sup>

- Make sure to label all foods, placing healthy options close to their less healthy alternatives (ex. turkey burger v. cheeseburger).
- If there are concerns with labeling ALL foods, start with labeling healthy items and then gradually add labels to regular menu items.
- Post easy-to-read menu with nutrition information at the cafeteria entrance.
- Keep information simple and easy to quickly read. Remember the goal is to educate not overwhelm.
- Look for cling or card holders to make it easy to post the information (see pics below).



Above: Nutrition information labels Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center.

### What should be Included on the label?

Nutrition labels are designed to inform and educate consumers. While they can be displayed several different ways, some basic information should be included. Below are the basic items that hospitals should display on a nutrition card:

- Calories, Sodium, Saturated Fat, (*Very Important!*)
- Price
- Standard serving size
- Recommended percent daily allowance



Above: Nutrition information labels at Carolinas Medical

### Hospital Highlight: Carolinas Medical Center, Charlotte, NC

Carolinas Medical Center has a comprehensive labeling system in their main cafeteria. They label foods at the point-of-selection with nutrition information to inform consumers of their nutritive intake and to educate consumers on the proper portions for such foods. The labels are posted in a variety of ways. Most of the labels also display the price of the item along with icons that correspond with the items' particular nutrition qualities (i.e heart healthy, carb conscious, vegan, etc.).



	Portion Size	Calories	Total Fat (g)	Saturated Fat (g)	Trans Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)
Chicken Salad on whole wheat	1.5 cup (1.50)	313	17g (33%)	6.7g (13%)	0.0g	130mg (26%)
Tuna Salad on whole wheat	1.5 cup (1.50)	253	8.5g (17%)	1.5g (3%)	0.0g	100mg (20%)
Egg Salad on whole wheat	1.5 cup (1.50)	323	16.5g (33%)	6.7g (13%)	0.0g	130mg (26%)
Smoked Turkey on whole wheat	1.5 cup (1.50)	225	11g (22%)	4.5g (9%)	0.0g	59g (12%)
Roast Beef on whole wheat	1.5 cup (1.50)	205	10g (20%)	4.5g (9%)	0.0g	29g (6%)
Veggie burger on whole wheat bun	1.5 cup (1.50)	246	12g (24%)	5.5g (11%)	0.0g	1038mg (208%)
Hamburger on whole wheat bun	1.5 cup (1.50)	390	20g (40%)	10g (20%)	0.0g	552mg (110%)
Philly steak & cheese on whole wheat bun	1.5 cup (1.50)	325	16.5g (33%)	6.7g (13%)	0.0g	430mg (86%)
Grilled chicken on whole wheat bun	1.5 cup (1.50)	270	13.5g (27%)	5.5g (11%)	0.0g	1648mg (329%)
Grilled cheese on white	1.5 cup (1.50)	340	17g (34%)	8.5g (17%)	0.0g	313mg (63%)
Chicken tenders	1.5 cup (1.50)	220	11g (22%)	4.5g (9%)	0.0g	1180mg (236%)
Catfish strips	1.5 cup (1.50)	260	13g (26%)	6.5g (13%)	0.0g	630mg (126%)

Above is a display at the front of the serving line indicating the healthy options for the day at **Murphy Medical Center**. Notice that the healthy choices are identified with a small, simple red apple. Although not every choice is a healthy one, the nutrition information is provided for ALL options.

	Visitor	Employee
<b>Grilled Chicken Sandwich</b> Calories- 295 Fat - 6.5 gms Sodium - 335 mg	\$2.00	\$1.75
<b>Turkey Burger</b> Calories- 300 Fat 11gms Sodium - 363 mg	\$1.50	\$1.25
<b>Veggie Burger</b> Calories-350 Fat 5.0 gms Sodium - 553 mg	\$1.50	\$1.25
<b>Hamburger</b> Calories- 358 Fat -15 gms Sodium - 335 mg	\$2.00	\$1.75
<b>Cheeseburger</b> Calories- 465 Fat -24 gms Sodium - 537 mg	\$2.25	\$2.00
<b>Double Cheeseburger</b> Calories- 790 Fat 45 gms Sodium - 597 mg	\$3.75	\$3.50
<b>Bacon Cheeseburger</b> Calories- 540 Fat 31 gms Sodium - 739 mg	\$2.50	\$2.40
<b>Double Bacon Cheeseburger</b> Calories- 940 Fat 56 gms Sodium - 921 mg	\$4.25	\$3.95
<b>Hog Dog 1/4 LB</b> Calories-500 Fat 35 gms Sodium - 1173 mg	\$2.25	\$1.95

Above is a great sign posted at the grill station at **FirstHealth Moore Regional**. It is quite simple and the healthy options are indicated in **Red**. If you'll notice, the nutrition information is posted as well and the healthier options are cheaper than the traditional options! Can making a healthy choice be any easier?



The salad bar can be a place where it is just as easy to make healthy choices as it is to make not so healthy choices, depending on your toppings. Help your customers understand what makes a great salad by providing a sample as done so at **Forsyth Medical Center**. (Tip: Create Salads that go great with vinaigrettes and other healthy dressings!)

<sup>1</sup> Perez-Escamilla R, Haldeman L. Food label use modifies association of income with dietary quality. J Nutr. 2002;132(4):768-772.

<sup>2</sup> Burton S, Creyer EH, Kees J, Huggins K. Attacking the Obesity Epidemic: The potential Health Benefits Providing Nutrition Information in Restaurants. Am Journal of Public Health. 2006;96(9):1669-1675.

<sup>3</sup> Buscher LA, Martin KA, Crocker S. Point-of-purchase messages framed in terms of cost, convenience, taste, and energy improve healthful snack selection in a college foodservice setting. J Am Diet Assoc. 2001;101(8):909-913.