

## *Need some help using restaurant menu labels?*

You may know that last year, legislation was passed in Albany County which makes it mandatory that any chain restaurant with 15 or more units post calorie values on their menus or menu boards. Reading menu labels can really help people make healthier meal choices when dining out. But it can also be aggravating or confusing! Some people say that it can take the enjoyment away when you realize how many calories are in a favorite food. On the other hand, people say knowing the calories allows them to choose certain items less often, or to try lower calorie options which they may like just as well. Choice is a good thing! How many calories are too many? That depends. If you look on a food label, it is based on 2,000 calories a day as an average. You may need more or less depending on your size and activity level, but it is a good place to start. For instance, if a dinner choice alone contains 1,600 calories, it would be easy to go way over 2000 calories when you take the whole day into account. Another thing to consider is how often you eat out. For someone who practically always eats at home, an occasional splurge on a meal out is much more manageable than for someone who eats out often.

A great tool—

If you know you will be eating out and would like to know where to go locally for healthy choices, try the Healthy Dining Finder at:

[www.healthydiningfinder.com](http://www.healthydiningfinder.com)

Just enter your zip code, select a price range, how far you want to travel, type of service, and see what options come up. It will list specific menu items with calories.

We're excited at Cornell Cooperative Extension to partner with the Albany County Department of Health to provide education and outreach for a Calorie Labeling Awareness Campaign. Continue to check our website at [www.ccealbany.com](http://www.ccealbany.com) for further information.



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