

## Nutritional info helps lunch lady image

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A U.S. study suggests providing nutritional information with high school cafeteria lunch choices improves students' satisfaction with such programs.

But while the Penn State study suggests such information helps students make better food choices, it unfortunately does not improve opinions concerning dining ambiance or cost.

"Findings from this study illustrate the value of informed choice in yielding greater customer satisfaction with dining occasions," the researchers reported. "Providing nutrition information at the point of service increased the student ratings of school nutrition programs that already were rated above average, especially in food quality."

While the nutrition scientists -- associate professors David Cranage, Martha Conklin and Carolyn Lambert -- agree more research is necessary to expand the findings outside the northeastern United States, they note the results mirror previous studies involving adults.

While gender and frequency of participation did not influence students' ratings, satisfaction with overall food service and food quality dropped with increasing grade level. Ninth graders' ratings were higher than seniors' ratings. However, the ratings of service personnel actually rose with increasing grade level.

The study is presented in the *Journal of Child Nutrition and Management*.

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