

# Why counting calories is not all about the numbers

January 27 2015, by Lindsey Elliott

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Looking to stay healthy this year? A new regulation may help in your endeavor.

"We know that Americans eat about one-third or more of their meals away from the home," said Sandy Procter, assistant professor of [human nutrition](#) at Kansas State University. "Choosing healthy options at restaurants can be tricky because you don't know the amount of calories in those items. This new regulation will make it easier for consumers to make a healthy decision."

The new regulation announced by the Food and Drug Administration requires chain restaurants with 20 or more stores to list [calorie information](#) on menus and menu boards. It also applies to vending machines with 20 or more locations. The rule was finalized in December 2014 and restaurants and vending machine companies have one year to get the labels in place.

While these new labels will give consumers more information before making their meal decision, Procter says to take into account that it's not just about the calories when making food selections.

"Watch [portion sizes](#)," she said. "Portions are really large in a lot of cases, so it can be difficult to find something that would be considered an appropriate portion size when we go out to eat. I would say a lot of people know the right things to eat and make healthful decisions; the issue is more in the sheer volume of food we eat."

The new labeling regulation is part of the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Provided by Kansas State University

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