

Do food blogs serve as a source of nutritionally balanced recipes?

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More people are cooking at home, and more people are finding their recipes online via food blogs. The photos of dishes posted on the blogs, however, may attract potential cooks more than the nutritional value of the recipes. In addition, many food companies sponsor these sites, so the recipes become advertisements for their products. This has the potential to change the healthfulness of the recipes.

Researchers in Massachusetts investigated whether food blogs provided nutritionally balanced [recipes](#) for the public or not. According to lead author Elizabeth Schneider, MS, RD, Nutrition Department, Simmons College, Boston, "We identified 6 food blogs that were very popular. It is really surprising that these blogs may have more than 2 million visits per month. This large reach makes the food blog an important component for nutrition education."

Their final sample included 96 recipes for entrees, which were then classified according to their main ingredient. Not surprisingly, the vegetarian entrees were lower in calories, saturated fat, and sodium. Overall, the sampled recipes were acceptable in calories but excessive in saturated fat and sodium. This creates an opportunity for nutrition educators and dietitians to educate clients, partner with bloggers, or begin their own food blogs that post healthier recipes.

The authors point out that multiple opportunities exist for a dietitian's presence online and that it is the responsibility of food and nutrition professionals to recognize these opportunities and continue to come up with ways to inform the public on the nutritional value of recipes as consumers use online search more than ever.

"It's exciting to live in an online generation and I believe there is a need for dietitians to have a spot in the [food](#) blogging culture," concludes Schneider. "Wouldn't it be great to find a 'dietitian approved'

icon next to healthy online recipes, giving the public peace of mind knowing that the recipes are nutritious?"

More information: "Do Food Blogs Serve as a Source of Nutritionally Balanced Recipes? An Analysis of 6 Popular Food Blogs," by Elizabeth P. Schneider, MS, RD; Emily E. McGovern, MS, RD; Colleen L. Lynch, MS, RD; Lisa S. Brown, PhD, RD, appears in the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, Volume 45, Issue 6 (November/December 2013)

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