

[IMAGE]

## Counting Calories Just Got Easier

By Editorial Staff

When it comes to weight loss, calories are your best friend and worst enemy, depending on how you look at it. That's because the amount of calories you consume versus how many you burn determines whether you lose or gain weight, pure and simple. Consume high-calorie foods all day, and you'll need to burn an even greater amount of calories in the gym or elsewhere in order to come out even, much less create a calorie deficit that leads to weight loss.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is making calorie counting easier when you eat out with its recent mandate that all restaurants / fast-food chains / ready-to-eat providers with 20 or more locations make the calories in their menu items transparent. While some eateries have provided nutritional information, including calories, on their menus for some time, and a few states have requirements in that regard, it's no longer an option.

nutrition facts - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark Note that the new regulations also cover movie theaters, supermarkets and convenience stores; basically, anyone who sells ready-to-eat food and has 20 or more locations must comply with the new rule, a long-delayed provision of the Affordable Care Act of 2010 ("Obamacare"). Even vending-machine items must list calories.

So if you're a calorie counter, life just got a whole lot easier – or more complicated, depending on your perspective. You can now count calories just about wherever you go! You may discover that some of your favorite meals are no longer favorites because they pack way more calories than you possibly imagined.

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