

What people need to know about calories on menus in Ireland

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Showing the calorie content of foods and drinks for sale in food outlets helps people make healthier choices. The Minister for Health, Dr James Reilly, T.D. is keen to have the calorie content of foods on menus to help reduce the level of obesity in Ireland. The vast majority of consumers in Ireland (over 95%) want calorie information on menus*. Consumers believe calorie menu labelling helps them make healthier choices and control their weight.

*"Calories on menus in Ireland- Report on a National Consultation, 2012"

**FOR TECHNICAL INFORMATION ON CALORIE MENU LABELLING SEE
'PUTTING CALORIES ON MENUS IN IRELAND- TECHNICAL GUIDANCE FOR FOOD BUSINESS.'**

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Key Facts on Obesity from 1990 to 2011

In these 20 years obesity
rates have rocketed.

Obesity has **almost doubled**
amongst Irish women



Obesity has **trebled**
amongst Irish men



When calories
are on menus,
people eat far
less calories

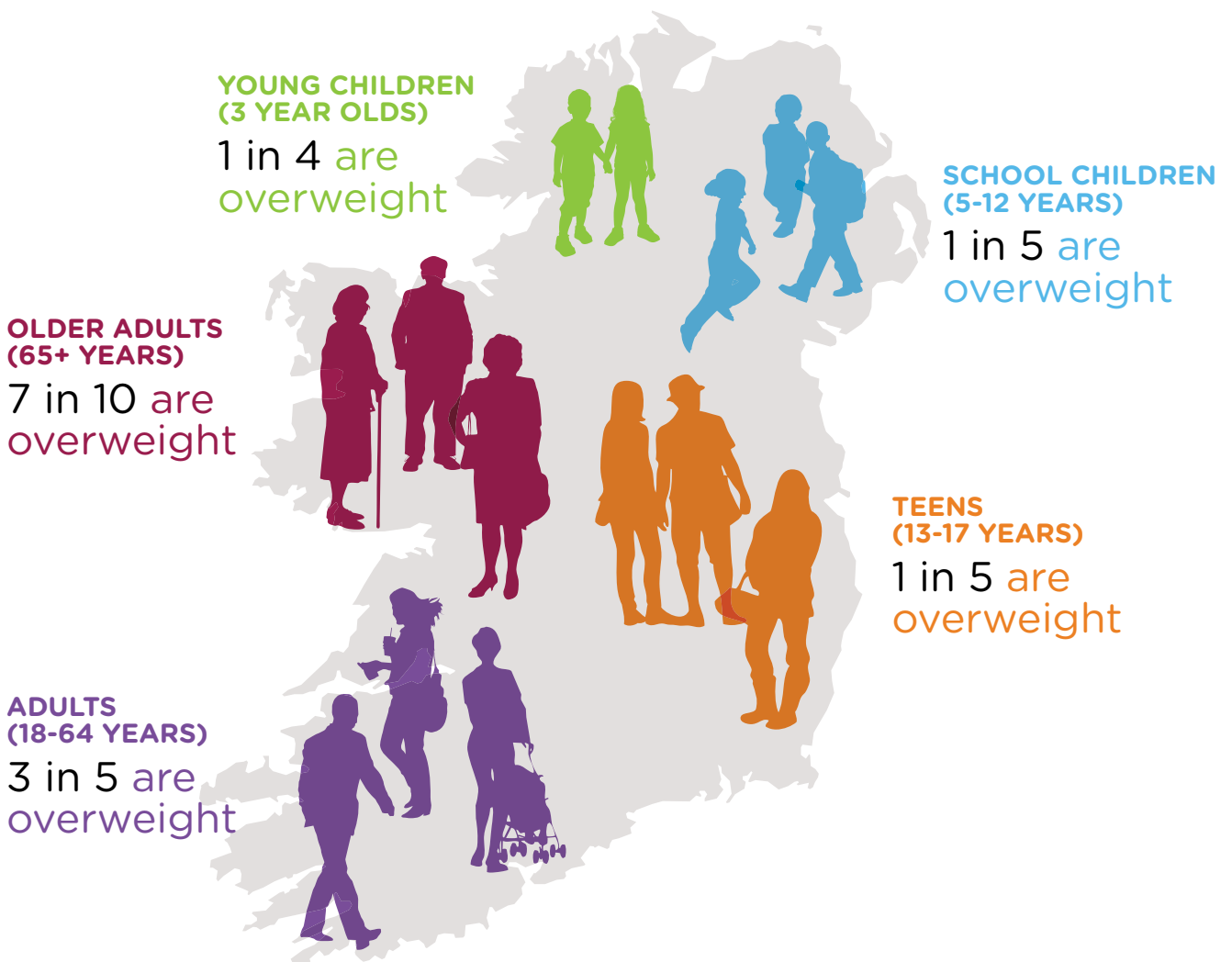


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Why is putting calories on menus important?

THE PROBLEM OF BEING OVERWEIGHT AFFECTS PEOPLE OF ALL AGES IN IRELAND.



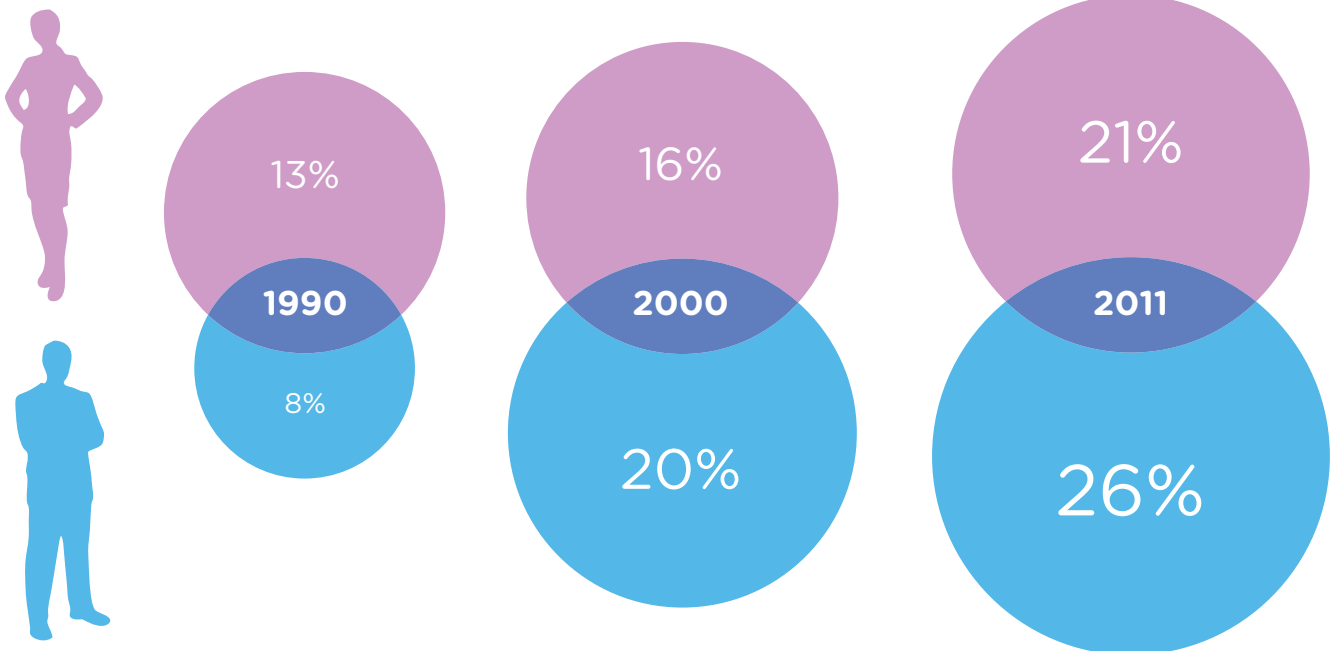
“Ireland has the second highest rate of obesity in Europe.”

OBESITY = SEVERELY OVERWEIGHT

The more overweight a person becomes, the greater the risks to their health. When a person is more than about 2 stone overweight, he/she is obese. Therefore, obesity is 'severely overweight.'

Since 1990, obesity (severely overweight) in Ireland has **trebled** in men and almost **doubled** in women.

**% Women Obese
(SEVERELY OVERWEIGHT)**



**% Men Obese
(SEVERELY OVERWEIGHT)**

“More and more people in Ireland are suffering from heart disease, cancer, diabetes and stroke because of obesity.”

Does putting calories on menus work?

PEOPLE EAT LESS WHEN CALORIES ARE DISPLAYED ON MENUS

Consumers can see the amount of calories in the foods for sale beside the price when making their choice. Research in America found that when calories are on menus, people ate:

- 152 less calories **at hamburger joints with each purchase**
- 73 less calories **at sandwich bars with each purchase**
- 6% less calories **overall each day**

If calorie intakes are reduced by this much in Ireland, it will have a major effect on our obesity problem.



Calories on menu
can help consumers
make healthier
choices about
what they eat.

How will putting calories on menus inform the consumer?

High calorie foods and drinks are widely available to consumers. Eating such foods and drinks too often will result in weight gain and lead to overweight and obesity.

When foods and drinks are prepared outside the home, the consumer does not know how many calories are in them. Some foods and drinks can be much higher in calories than consumers realise.

When calories are on menus, the amount of calories in each food item for sale is shown.

This helps consumers to make more informed choices about what they eat.

How calories on menus can help consumers to make healthier choices

Calories on menus can help consumers to choose smaller portions.

Food portion sizes available to consumers have become much bigger in recent years. Bigger portions lead consumers to eat more calories.

BAGEL

Calorie Difference: 210 calories



3 inch diameter
140 calories

6 inch diameter
350 calories

CHEESEBURGER

Calorie Difference: 195 calories



295 calories

490 calories

SOFT DRINK

Calorie Difference: 138 calories

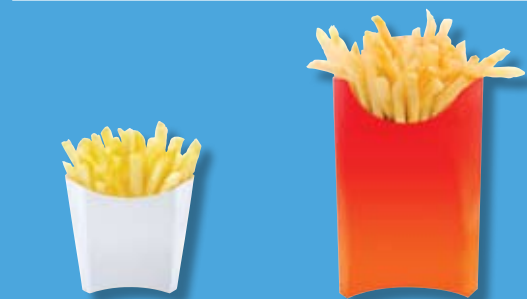


200mls
92 calories

500mls
230 calories

CHIPS

Calorie Difference: 200 calories



70g
210 calories

200g
460 calories

“Calories on menus can help consumers avoid high calorie ‘extras’.”

Syrups, creams and sauces are **very** high in calories. These ‘extras’ are often added to foods and drinks that are already high in calories.

ADDING SYRUP
TO A LARGE
COFFEE CAN
ADD UP TO

65 EXTRA
CALORIES



ADDING ‘CREAM
ON TOP’ CAN
ADD UP TO

80 EXTRA
CALORIES



ADDING FULL-FAT
MAYONNAISE CAN
ADD UP TO

140 EXTRA
CALORIES



'Making sense' of calorie information on menus

How many calories adults and children need every day will be displayed to help consumers 'make sense' of calorie information on foods and drinks on sale.



CHILDREN
NEED ABOUT
1,800
CALORIES A DAY



WOMEN
NEED ABOUT
2,000
CALORIES A DAY

MEN NEED ABOUT
2,500
CALORIES A DAY



“Calories on menus can help people stay within their calorie limits.”

Calories on menus – What consumers can expect

People can expect to see the amount of calories beside the price of food and drink on sale. The calorie information should be as clear and easy to read as the price of the item.

SANDWICHES	CALORIES*	PRICE
HAMBURGER	280kcal	€ 1.89
CHEESEBURGER	295kcal	€ 1.99
DOUBLE CHEESEBURGER	440kcal	€ 2.89
FRIED CHICKEN SANDWICH	550kcal	€ 3.89
GRILLED CHICKEN SANDWICH	450kcal	€ 3.89
SIDES		
FRIES (REGULAR)	330kcal	€ 1.05
FRIES (LARGE)	460kcal	€ 1.65
ONION RINGS (LARGE)	360kcal	€ 1.95
DRINKS		
REGULAR CHOCOLATE SHAKE	385kcal	€ 2.35
COLA (LARGE)	210kcal	€ 1.55
DIET COLA (LARGE)	0kcal	€ 1.55

*Another word for 'calories' is 'kcal'

Foods for sharing – How best to show the calories

Calories are shown for the portion of food or drink served. However, for food items that contain more than one portion – for example, a whole pizza – there are two ways calories can be shown on the menu:

THE TOTAL CALORIES AND THE NUMBER OF PORTIONS

TOTAL CALORIES

2,690 kcal

Serves 4



OR

THE CALORIES PER PORTION AND THE NUMBER OF PORTIONS

TOTAL CALORIES

672 kcal

There are
4 portions
in the whole pizza



Calories on menus must be accurate

Displaying the amount of calories on food and drinks for sale is a form of labelling. The most important rule of labelling is that the consumer must not be misled. The FSAI is responsible for protecting consumer health and consumer interests in terms of food labelling.

“Displaying the amount of calories on food and drinks for sale is a form of labelling. The most important rule of labelling is that the consumer must not be misled.”

Have calories on menus been used in any other country?

Yes. Putting calories on menus was first introduced in **America** in 2003. In 2012 a new food law was introduced making it mandatory to display calories on menus throughout the U.S.

Parts of **Australia** have also introduced calories on menus. In the American and Australian states where putting calories on menus has been introduced, large food companies must, by law, have calories on their menus.

In **Britain**, food businesses voluntarily put calories on menus. Below are some of the companies in the UK that display calories on their menus.

- Burger King United Kingdom Ltd
- Compass Group UK & Ireland
- KFC UKI
- Kraft Foods
- Marks & Spencer
- McDonald's Restaurant Ltd
- Pizza Hut (UK) Limited
- Starbucks Coffee Company
- Tesco PLC
- YO! Sushi

The FSAI and the Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland (FSANI) are working together to develop a system for calorie menu label that works best throughout the island of Ireland. Working together ensures a common approach to calorie menu labelling is in place in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. This benefits both consumers and food businesses throughout Ireland.

Further Information

For further information on calorie menu labelling in Ireland, please see:

**'PUTTING CALORIES ON MENUS IN IRELAND -
TECHNICAL GUIDANCE FOR FOOD BUSINESSES'**

**'PUTTING CALORIES ON MENUS IN IRELAND -
REPORT ON A NATIONAL CONSULTATION 2012'**

Notes



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