

Potential Impact of Menu Labeling

OVERVIEW. On August 14, 2008, the California Center for Public Health Advocacy (CCPHA) and the Center for Weight and Health of the University of California released a white paper entitled *Potential Impact of Menu Labeling of Fast Foods in California*. This paper, authored by the [Center for Weight and Health](#), shows that posting calorie information on menu boards at fast-food restaurants could help Californians avoid more than two pounds of weight gain per year and allow the state as a whole to avoid millions of pounds annually.

THE ANALYSIS. The 82% of Californians who regularly eat at fast-food restaurants do so an average of 3.4 times per week. A [2008 peer-reviewed study](#) conducted at fast-food restaurants in New York City found that 32% of customers reported seeing calorie information posted on splash guards and they purchased meals averaging 52 fewer calories than customers who did not see the calorie information. The paper explores the range of possible effects of providing calorie information on menu boards. For summary information, see the [Press Release](#), [Fact Sheet](#), and accompanying [White Paper](#).

THE FINDINGS. The U.C. Center for Weight and Health conservatively calculates that, on an annual basis, menu labeling could reduce the average adult fast-food patron's yearly consumption by 9,302 calories, preventing the equivalent of 2.7 pounds of weight gain per person annually. If 80% of patrons see the information, the analysis shows, menu labeling could result in an overall prevention of 40 million pounds of weight gain annually for the entire state.