

# Healthy Eating

## Are Americans Eating Healthy When They Eat Out?

(NAPSA)—If you're on a diet, you have lots of company. According to a recent poll, one in four Americans (24 percent) is currently on a diet. A higher percentage of women (29 percent) were watching their weight compared to men (18 percent).

According to the poll conducted by Maritz Research, a leader in marketing research, male and female dieters were equally likely to maintain dietary discipline. Two-thirds (66 percent) of dieters indicated that they will stick to their diets, making healthy choices when eating out, compared to "overindulging" because dining out is a special occasion. Furthermore, nearly six out of 10 (57 percent) of those surveyed indicated that offering low-carb or other healthy dining options was at least "somewhat important" in their decision when choosing a restaurant.

That's good, as health professionals continue to sound the alarm that obesity is the biggest health threat to Americans.

"As all of the publicity around the need to develop better eating habits continues to resonate with a large segment of the population, I would expect that restaurant concepts built around healthy eating will be a large part of the future landscape of casual dining," said Rick Garlick, director of Consulting and Strategic Implementation for the Maritz Research Hospitality Group.

"A good example is Darden's Seasons 52 restaurant that launched in Florida and recently expanded to Atlanta. Every item on their menu contains less than 475 calories, and features lean meats and seafood, good carbs and beneficial oils such as extra virgin olive oil—a unique departure from



**DINING OUT?—A new poll reveals diet and eating habits of Americans and shows that given the choice of fried or grilled, respondents preferred grilled.**

the standard fried fare at many restaurants."

The online survey of nearly 1,900 Americans who recently ate at a casual dining restaurant also showed that when given a choice between food that is grilled or fried, an overwhelming majority (87 percent) said they preferred their food grilled.

"When dining out, you notice that many restaurants do not offer a grilled option to their customers. For example, how many menus offer fried wings as an appetizer, compared to those that offer a grilled wing option with a reduced-fat hot sauce?" said Garlick. "Unless you want fried, you often are left out."

The survey also revealed that more Americans are eschewing red meat. Thirty-six percent said they were eating less red meat compared to five years ago. Only 8 percent said that they were eating more red meat.