

Calories on menus

As of January 1, 2017, all food-service chains with 20 or more locations in Ontario must post the number of calories in the food and drink items on their menus or on display. This is part of the *Healthy Menu Choices Act, 2015*.

This means you can see the number of calories posted at places such as:

- fast-food restaurants
- restaurants
- coffee shops
- grocery and convenience stores
- movie theatres

What menus tell you

Menus now provide the number of calories you get from each of the standard food or drink items that are sold. You'll find calories below, beside or above the name or price of each standard food item on the menu.

A standard food item is a restaurant-type food or drink that:

- is sold in a standard or regular size
- is served, processed and/or prepared in a regulated location
- is meant to be eaten/drunk right away, with no further preparation by the customer

The number of calories will appear on menus, menu boards, tags or labels, and signs.

How the act is enforced

Inspectors from local public health units will visit all businesses covered by the law, and will also respond to any complaints about a business not following the law. This could lead to education, a warning, and then a fine if they continue not to follow the law.

What calories measure

We need calories every day to fuel our basic body functions and physical activity. We eat and drink to get this energy, which is measured in calories.

Knowing how many calories are in our food and drinks is part of getting the right amount of energy we need every day.

How many calories we need a day

In addition to posting calories, businesses must post one of the following statements* that provide context on the average daily calorie needs:

Adults and youth (ages 13 and older) need an average of 2,000 calories a day, and children (ages 4 to 12) need an average of 1,500 calories a day. However, individual needs vary.

or

The average adult requires approximately 2,000 to 2,400 calories per day. However, individual calorie needs may vary.

*As of January 1, 2018, businesses can only post the first statement (adults and youth).

How many calories we need depends on many factors, like your age, gender and level of activity. You can use Canada's Food Guide to get an idea of the number of calories you need in a day.

Where to find more information

To learn more about this legislation, please visit ontario.ca/CaloriesOnMenus or send any questions you may have to menulabelling@ontario.ca.