



衛生防護中心
Centre for Health Protection

Risk Communication Advisory Group (RCAG)

Publicity Plan for EatSmart@restaurant.hk Campaign

Purpose

This paper provides the background and summaries a plan to publicize the EatSmart@restaurant.hk Campaign (Campaign) and seeks members' views to further promote the Campaign.

Background

2. In Hong Kong, NCD such as cancers, heart diseases and cerebrovascular diseases, which pose a significant social and economic burden to the society, are the major causes of deaths and accounted for 56% of total deaths in 2005. While biological make-up plays a role in the development of NCD, they are mainly caused by a core set of common and modifiable risk factors related to life style. Unhealthy dietary habit is an important risk factor, among the others.

3. Obesity is also prevalent in Hong Kong chiefly as a result of unhealthy eating habit and sedentary life style. The Heart Health Survey conducted the Department of Health (DH) in 2004/2005, which provide a “close-up” on cardiovascular diseases and related risk factors in Hong Kong, revealed that 20.5% of the adult population aged 15 to 84 (BMI 23.0 – 24.9) were overweight and 27.2% were obese (BMI > 25). As far as students are concerned, the prevalence of obesity (weight > median weight for height × 120%) among local primary school students increased gradually from 16.4% in 1997/1998 to 20.2% in 2005/2006.

4. Owing to the major shift in eating habit resulted from rapid social and economic changes, our traditional fruit and vegetable-rich diet with lots of carbohydrate and fibre has been replaced by one that is laden with protein and fat. A recent telephone survey commissioned by the



Department of Health (DH) for local adults in 2006 showed that only 21.6% of respondents consumed at least 5 servings (equivalent to 400g) of fruit and vegetable daily on average, the serving size recommended by the World Health Organization.

5. Eating out plays an increasingly important part in Hong Kong people's lives. According to the Behavioural Risk Factor Surveillance System carried out by DH in 2005, half (52.8%) of the population had their eat-out lunch 5 or more times a week. Similar figures for eat-out breakfast and dinner are 32.2% and 11.3% respectively. In light of this, restaurants are among the most promising and influential partners for making a difference in people's diet.

6. A qualitative study on dietary and exercise practices of people in Hong Kong carried out by DH in 2005 indicated that eating out was a barrier to healthy eating. Indeed, a baseline survey of the campaign carried out in April 2007 showed that people eating out are not totally satisfied with the food served; over 90% of respondents would like restaurants to serve food with more fruit/vegetables, less fat/oil, less salt and less sugar.

Testing the water

7. In light of the above findings, DH has launched a one-month pilot project of the EatSmart@restaurant.hk Campaign with relevant organisations commencing 30 July 2007. About 300 restaurants joined the project by providing and promoting a greater number of healthier dishes with increased fruit and vegetable and less in fat/oil, salt and sugar in accordance with the nutritional requirements set out by DH.

8. Evaluation of the pilot project using a survey of 50 randomly chosen restaurants and interviews of 500 customers and 200 restaurant personnel revealed that the project is feasible and effective; over 98% of customers supported healthy menus while 75% of customers would patronise again as a result; 95% of restaurant personnel found more customers opted for healthy dishes while 98% of the restaurant personnel considered it feasible to set healthy menu in restaurants.

9. Taking reference from the experience gained in the pilot project, DH is inviting an extended range of restaurants to participate in the Campaign.

Strategy used

10. The EatSmart@restaurant.hk Campaign adopts a multi-pronged strategy in line with the “Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health” advocated by the WHO that includes creating a conducive environment, education and support, publicity and advocacy, as well as research and evaluation. The Bangkok Charter for Health Promotion in a Globalized World promulgated by the WHO at the Sixth Global Conference on Health Promotion in 2005 also noted that cross-sectoral collaboration was the cornerstone for improving population health. Therefore, the DH has established a Taskforce with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), Hong Kong Federation of Restaurants Related Trades, the Association for Hong Kong Catering Services Management, Association of Restaurant Managers, Chinese Cuisine Training Institute, professional organisations and consumer representatives. The Taskforce will steer the whole campaign, and actively consult the catering industry and explore the feasibility of the Campaign.

11. The success of the Campaign hinges on, among other key factors, whether the patrons will choose to order healthy dishes, and whether customer choice will generate greater sales volume. The capability of restaurants in preparing healthy dishes that are appealing in look, smell and taste will also have a direct bearing on the effectiveness of the Campaign. To this end, DH has made reference to similar campaigns abroad and has worked closely with the local catering industry to develop nutritional benchmarks tailored to the local situation and needs. Training and support will also be provided for restaurant staff to strengthen their ability to design and prepare healthy dishes.

12. It is equally important to step up public education and promotion on healthy eating habits. Participating restaurants pledge to provide at least five healthy dishes (called “EatSmart Dishes”) including “More Fruit and Vegetables”¹ and “3 Less”² on their regular menus. They are

¹ Dish of “More Fruit and Vegetables” refers to dishes that have only vegetables and fruit as ingredients or where portions of vegetables and fruit are more than twice that of meat.

² Dish of “3 Less” refers to dishes that use less fat or oil, salt and sugar in cooking or preparation and meet the “three less” requirement.

also required to display an EatSmart Campaign decal at prominent locations and “EatSmart Dish” icons on menus to remind and encourage patrons to pick on these dishes. Continuous efforts will also be made to disseminate the message of healthy eating to the public through different channels while encouraging the catering sector to publicise and design new healthy specialty dishes for the public.

Need for Enhanced Publicity

13. As participation of restaurants in the Campaign is voluntary and sustainability of health-promoting efforts relies heavily on market forces, it will be of utmost importance to raise community awareness of healthy eating and booster demand for healthier dishes. Evaluation of the pilot project indicated that customers who were aware of the Campaign were five times more likely to choose the healthier dishes than those who were not. Besides, publicity is needed to recruit a critical mass of interested restaurants so that healthy choice would be made widely available to achieve public health impact.

14. The overall goal of the publicity programme is to convey the message that ‘healthy eating’ is something wise (for the individual), socially responsible (for restaurants) and trendy (for society) to go after.

15. As eating out is a common feature for all walks of life, the first wave of publicity efforts will target all members of the community, aiming to popularize the Campaign among people of any age and sex. Restaurant owners and operators will be other primary targets. Once a critical mass of restaurants has been formed and public support for healthier food options when eating out has been established, emphasis will be given to people having the greatest need for healthy eating promotion, namely the working male, single, blue collar, less educated and those who had lower personal or household income.

Publicity measures

16. A basket of publicity measures are proposed as per Annex. Publicity will be most intensive in 2008/09 when the Campaign officially launches on 10 April 2008.

Advice Sought

17. Members are invited to note the content of this paper and advise on how to further promote the Campaign.

Central Health Education Unit
February 2008

Publicity measures on 'EatSmart@restaurant.hk' Campaign

	Date / period	Activities	Primary target		
			Trade	Public	Politicians
2007/08					
1.	Dec 07	Healthy eating website	+	+	
2.	Dec 07	Press conference	+	+	+
3.	Jan 08 – Apr 08	Distribution of intervention products for food premises	+		
4.	Jan 08	Briefing to Health panel			+
5.	Jan 08 – Mar 08	Briefing to District Councils			+
6.	Mar 08	Broadcast of 1st API	+	+	
7.	Mar 08 – Jun 08	Cable TV '至 FIT 男女' – 15 episodes		+	

	Date / period	Activities	Primary target		
			Trade	Public	Politicians
2008/09					
1.	Early Apr 08	Kick off ceremony	+	+	+
2.	Early Apr 08 - Jul 08	Advertising campaigns at MTR, KCR, Bus body and bus shelters (messages : strive to attract the public to patronize at campaign participants, e.g. 你今日去咗有營食肆?)	+	+	
3.	Early Aug 08	Placing banners or floating icons at popular websites and discussion forums (resembles that of a food guide with information on food/restaurants such as http://www.openrice.com)		+	

	Date / period	Activities	Primary target		
			Trade	Public	Politicians
4.	Apr 08, Jul 08, Oct 08, Jan 09	Recipe book publication (targeting different types of restaurant on a quarterly basis)	+		
5.	Apr 08 – Sep 08	RoadShows	+	+	
6.	May 08	RTHK1 ‘Ad-Wiser’ Radio programme - about 5 episodes	+	+	
7.	May 08	Sing Pao ‘醫者健談’ column		+	
8.	Jun 08	TV show during prime time (e.g. 15 sec short segment or product sponsorship)	+	+	
9.	Jun 08 & Dec 08	Broadcast of 2 nd and 3 rd APIs	+	+	
10	Aug 2008	Set up a new category in well established cooking competition	+		
11	Sep 2008	Distributing coupons offering discounts of EatSmart restaurants to the public in major exits of selected stations of Hong Kong Railway	+	+	
12	Oct 2008 – Nov 2008	Well known cuisine writers to taste and write about ES restaurants	+	+	
13	Mar 09	Distribution of intervention products for food premises (reprint)	+		

	Date / period	Activities	Primary target		
			Trade	Public	Politicians
2009/10					
1.	Apr 09 onwards	Placing banners or floating icons at popular websites and discussion forums (resembles that of a food guide with information on food/restaurants such as http://www.openrice.com)		+	

	Date / period	Activities	Primary target		
			Trade	Public	Politicians
2.	Apr 09, Jul 09, Oct 09, Jan 10	Recipe book publication (targeting different types of restaurant on a quarterly basis)	+		
3.	Early Apr 09 - Jul 09	Advertising campaigns at MTR, KCR, Bus body and bus shelters	+	+	
4.	Apr 09 – Sep 09	RoadShows	+	+	
5.	Jun 09	TV show during prime time (e.g. 15 sec short segment or product sponsorship)	+	+	
6.	Jun 09	Broadcast of 4 th API	+	+	
7.	Mar 10 onwards	Distribution of intervention products for food premises (reprint)	+		