

January 10

# Culinary Nutrition News: Nutrition Resolutions for 2010

Presented by ACF Chef & Child Foundation and Clemson University

2010 not only marks the ending of the first decade of the century, but it is also the beginning of a new decade where restoring health will be at the forefront of Americans' focus. With the extended debate over health care, there is one conversation that is critical—prevention. Making attempts to prevent diet-related diseases always manages to get lost in the shuffle. As we have said before, chefs are in a rare position to begin the fight against the battle of the bulge and its detrimental domino effect on health.

How so? For starters, staying up-to-date on the latest culinary nutrition news through these articles, Chef & Child Foundation newsletters and even the nutrition refresher course coming to a location near you during the 2010 American Culinary Federation (ACF) Events Series will be beneficial to you and your customers. New questions will emerge, and there will be new foods to investigate and healthy dishes to prepare, so plan on attending the nutrition refresher course at one of the four ACF regional conferences or national convention.

At these events, we will explore four topics of consideration for 2010: Nutrition and the Baby Boomer Generation, Incorporating Fiber Into the Diet, Healthful Cooking and Nutritional Ingredient Substitutions and Balancing the Plate from a Less-is-More Perspective. However, actually putting these concepts into practice is another topic, so begin by making your nutrition resolutions for 2010 right now.

## Nutrition and the baby boomer generation

As the baby boomer generation ages, their nutrition and dietary needs change. In 2006, baby boomers ages 42 to 60 totaled an estimated 78 million and comprised 26.1 percent of the total United States population. Therefore, the culinary world needs to acknowledge and adapt to the new needs of this population. For instance, as baby boomers' metabolism decreases, smaller portions will be vital to weight management. Smaller portions can mean a variety of things. It can be as simple as extending the “early bird specials” to everyone, or it may mean featuring portion- and calorie- controlled meals composed of more plant foods, such as legumes, whole grains, fruits and vegetables, leaner meats and low-fat dairy products.

Restaurants wanting to cater to this demographic should focus on highlighting functional foods that address health issues, such as cholesterol, blood pressure, vision and weight management. Promoting healthful ingredients, which

include antioxidants, high-energy and omega-3's, will also be valuable selling points for this market. Meals that highlight more plant foods and less saturated fats are key. Also, functional foods that naturally give an extra boost of healthfulness will become increasingly important to this generation, who must strive to consume as many nutritional components as they can in smaller amounts of food.

## Incorporating fiber into the diet

Fiber is not just a necessity for certain types of people. Fiber is needed in everyone's diet. It is easy to incorporate fiber into a diet when you think of it in terms of adding color and texture to a dish. Fiber is found in many foods, especially those in the fruit, vegetable and whole grain categories. Thankfully, these foods also enhance the appearance and texture of dishes making them worthy additions to any plate. For example, adding nuts, fruits, beans and vegetables to dishes provide a tasty boost of fiber. Also, substituting half or all white



'Baby boomers' (ages 42 to 60) account for nearly a quarter of the U.S. population, making them an important demographic in the culinary world.

rice, pasta and breads with whole grains is another way to incorporate more fiber and texture to dishes.

### Healthful cooking and nutritional ingredient substitutions

Half the battle of healthy cooking is in the ingredients used. In other words, swapping out certain foods for healthier alternatives means you are halfway there to providing a healthful dining experience to your customers. Using good fats, such as mono or unsaturated oils, is one example of ingredient substitution. You can also reduce the sodium content in dishes by using more flavorful ingredients, such as herbs, spices, mustards, chilies and citrus. Naturally savory “umami” foods, which include mushrooms, peas and tomatoes, can also help cut back on salt usage.

Since there are so many sweeteners available these days, trying to navigate between which ones are good and bad can be difficult. There are constantly new natural sugars hitting the market and creating a consumer frenzy, but what really matters—in addition to whether sugars are natural or artificial—is how you use them. Sugar is something that can be used sparingly regardless of one’s stand on sugar versus sugar replacements.

### Balancing the plate from a less-is-more perspective

The plate is like a canvas for chefs. The goal is always to create a beautifully executed dish that is filled with colors, textures, aromas and flavors. However, how one builds these dishes has changed over the years. Chefs agree that portion sizes are a good place to start. We are not necessarily promoting the shrinking of portions to minuscule bites, but rather building a plate that contains less fat and calories in a satisfying manner. The goal is to create dishes that are so tantalizing in taste that one forgets that the meat portion is slightly smaller than usual, or that there is not as much cheese as usual. Chefs are already known as artists, but

the question remains: Do you have the tools and the knowledge needed to turn common ingredients into something filling and extraordinary?

### What’s ahead in 2010

Before plunging headfirst into 2010, we must take a look back to consider the issues that most compelled us in 2009. Many ACF members responded to our survey that was featured in *The Culinary Insider* and gave us insight into your thoughts, concerns and ideas about culinary nutrition. From these results, we gathered some preliminary findings to share:

### Demographics

Those of you who completed the survey were evenly distributed across the country from a variety of occupations. Culinary arts programs, fine-dining establishments and on-site/contract feeding were the top responses for career category. However, a large group of chefs (47 percent) indicated employment in the “other” category, which ranged from private club chef to personal chef and from baking and pastry chef to non-profit soup kitchen chef. Within the overall group of respondents, most were executive chefs, while a number of others were chefs, culinary educators or restaurant owners. There were also students, dieticians and food scientists. Lastly, the majority (89 percent) of you were 31 years or older and have been in the food industry for 20 or more years (57 percent).

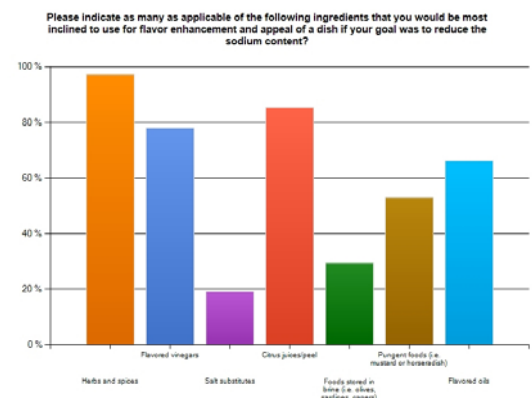
### "What's Cooking" category

First, we discovered that most of you are interested in learning more about organic and local, sustainable foods. Functional foods and omega-3's provoked the next greatest percentage of interest. We also found that there is a great reliance on internet sources for nutritional information, followed closely by magazines and trade journals.



When it comes to flavoring dishes without increasing the sodium content, the majority (97 percent) of you claimed herbs and spices as the best choice. Citrus juices and peel also topped the list along with flavored vinegars and oils. Lastly, we asked you to rank the order of characteristics that you consider when preparing a dish. Your rankings indicated the following order:

1. Taste
2. Appearance
3. Texture
4. Cost
5. Nutritional content
6. Calories per bite

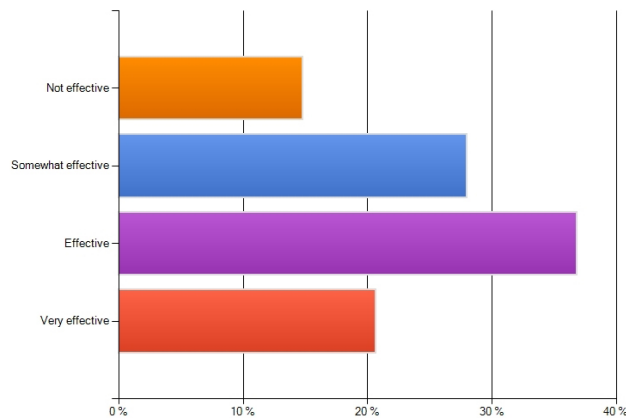


### Communication

In the survey, we also asked about the effectiveness of the kitchen staff in conveying ingredients, allergens and the nutritional content of dishes to customers. While most believed this

to be effective, there were still a number of you who found kitchen-to-customer communication to be less than ideal. In addition, when asked how information about nutrition, food allergens and ingredients are provided to the customer, a majority (34 percent) said servers are responsible for such communication.

How effective is the current level of engagement between your staff and your customers or those consuming the food prepared in regards to communicating ingredients, allergens and nutritional content of menu items?



### COOKING FOR KIDS

Another interesting question from the 2009 nutrition survey asked if chefs felt that the nutritional needs of children were being met by the menus in their establishments. Respondents were encouraged to give examples if they answered "yes." A large number of you confessed that your establishment does not cater to the nutritional needs of children. However, several people gave reasons for this disconnect by stating that it is the parents' job to make decisions about nutrition for their family. On the other hand, many chefs said you do meet these needs and offered a variety of examples from your operation's kid's menus:

- Serve Greek salads, fresh fruit plates with yogurt, grilled wild Alaskan salmon with vegetables and rice, and petite filet of beef with vegetables and potatoes.
- Provide balanced menus with a good amount of fruits and vegetables.
- Offer a healthy choice on snack bar menu for children, including grilled chicken breast served with fruit.
- Follow United States Department of Agriculture guidelines using cycle menus from Nutrikids ([www.nutrikids.com/](http://www.nutrikids.com/)).
- Offer child-sized adult meals with no added salt or sugar.
- Provide children's buffets with sound nutritional fundamentals—a balance of protein, fats, vegetables and grains.

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### About the American Culinary Federation and the Chef & Child Foundation



The American Culinary Federation, Inc., established in 1929, is the premier professional organization for culinarians in North America. With more than 22,000 members spanning 230 chapters nationwide, ACF is the culinary leader in offering educational resources, training, apprenticeship and accreditation. In addition, ACF operates the most comprehensive certification program for chefs in the United States. ACF is home to ACF Culinary Team USA, the official representative for the United States in major international

culinary competitions, and to the Chef & Child Foundation, founded in 1989 to promote proper nutrition in children and to combat childhood obesity. For more information, visit [www.acfchefs.org](http://www.acfchefs.org).

### About Clemson University



CU CHEFS® (Clemson University's Cooking and Healthy Eating Food Specialists) instructional program, led by Dr. Marge Condrasky, Associate Professor in Food Science and Human Nutrition, is a registered trademark of Clemson University designed to promote changes in menu planning, food purchasing, food preparation and food consumption behaviors with a goal of fostering good health through healthy nutrition. 'Culinary nutrition' is the application of nutrition principles combined with food science knowledge displayed through a mastery of culinary skills. The results are healthy eating behaviors grounded in culinary confidence and nutrition alertness. CU CHEFS® promotes an awareness of the latest trends in foods and nutrition through the demonstration of proficient culinary skills to produce flavorful, health-inspired menus for schools, churches, restaurants. Clemson University, located in Clemson, S.C., is ranked 22 among the nation's top public institutions. Since 2001, Clemson has doubled external research funding, raised the academic profile of the student body, increased retention and graduation rates, launched high-profile economic development and has earned national accolades, including being named *TIME* magazine's Public College of the Year.