Health News You Can Use: Tracking your health-related dining choices

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The food choices we make directly affect our health. People with high blood pressure–a group that, according to the CDC, includes more than 70% of people 60 years of age or older – need to be aware of the salt content of their food. For many people, saturated fat, sugar, or fiber are an important concern. People who watch their weight count calories. And, of course, people with food allergies or gluten sensitivity need to avoid ingredients that could harm them.

Erickson Senior Living provides a valuable tool for learning key information about the dishes served in Riderwood's dining venues. Included in MyErickson, it's called MyNutrition. For nearly everything on the menu, from appetizers to desserts, you can see a nutritional profile. For most, you can also see a list of ingredients. Here's an example: Suppose you're thinking about going to Windsor to order the Mediterranean Bowl. If you check MyNutrition, you'll see that it has 450 calories, 14% of the day's recommended limit for saturated fat, and 40% for sodium. The nutrition label also tells you about fiber, protein, and several vitamins and minerals. Finally, it lists all the ingredients in the dish.

Here are the basics for using MyNutrition:

1. Open the "Dining Information" tab in MyErickson. Scroll all the way to the bottom and click on the blue box labeled "MyNutrition." Then, click the first box, also labeled "MyNutrition." The next step is to click a button labeled "Open MyNutrition." You might then see a little box with general information headed "NetNutrition." Close that, and you'll be in the MyNutrition app itself.



In this screenshot, you can see an example of the Nutrition Information provided for the Riderwood dining selections; in this case for Cream of Broccoli soup.

2. Choose the dining venue, the date of your visit, and the meal (that is, lunch or dinner). Note that the specials are listed separately.

3. Find the dishes you're interested in. They are arranged by the elements of a meal (salad, soup, various kinds of entrees, and so forth). You'll see the name and icons showing some common allergens. To see the nutritional details, click on the name of the dish.

This is just a brief guide. You can do more, like assembling the separate components into an entire meal. For a full description of how to get the most out of MyNutrition, after you click on the blue box labeled "MyNutrition," click the second box, labeled "How to use MyNutrition."

What we eat affects our health as we age. MyNutrition is a tool that can help us make informed dietary choices.