

Over 1 000 restaurants of EatSmart Restaurant Star + Campaign offer more healthy choices for public

The Department of Health (DH) launched the EatSmart Restaurant (ESR) Star + Campaign to enhance the EatSmart Restaurant Campaign, which has been running for over 10 years. The enhanced ESR Star + Campaign has introduced a new star system which uses one star, two stars or three stars to indicate different EatSmart Dishes and promotions offered by the ESRs. The ESR Star + Campaign aims to encourage more restaurants to provide a wider range of healthier dishes and assist members of the public in putting healthy eating into practice. At present, a total of 1 028 outlets under 280 brands have enrolled, with nearly half of them being three-star ESRs.

Officiating at the launch ceremony for the ESR Star + Campaign today (May 2), the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, said, "Maintaining a healthy diet is beneficial to the overall health of the public and the prevention of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). The Government last year announced the 'Towards 2025: Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Control Non-communicable Diseases in Hong Kong', focusing on changing four NCDs-related behavioural risk factors, namely unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, tobacco use and harmful use of alcohol, and setting targets to reduce the burden of NCDs in Hong Kong by 2025."

Professor Chan pointed out that a healthy diet is essential to the success of the strategy and action plan, while the catering industry is the Government's most important partner in promoting a healthy diet. She expressed gratitude to the Association for Hong Kong Catering Services Management Ltd, the Hong Kong Federation of Restaurants and Related Trades Ltd, the Association of Restaurant Managers and the Institution of Dining Art for their support, as well as restaurant chains and other individual ESRs for their participation, which has contributed to spicing up Hong Kong's reputation as a culinary paradise with a healthy element.

Also attending the ESR Star + Campaign's launch ceremony, the Director of Health, Dr Constance Chan, said that since the launch of the EatSmart Restaurant Campaign in 2008, the public have been able to savour healthier choices when eating out, while food premises are encouraged to offer a wider variety of healthy dishes, bringing a positive impact on both consumers and the catering industry.

According to a survey conducted by the DH in 2016, over 90 per cent of respondents hoped that food premises could provide additional healthier choices. When eating out or ordering takeaway food, 72 per cent of respondents will choose dishes with more fruit and vegetables, while 72 to 77 per cent will choose dishes with less oil, salt and sugar. Around 90 per cent said that they would patronise ESRs that provide healthier dishes again.

As for food premises, the survey found that 76 per cent of the interviewed ESRs observed an increase in customers who choose EatSmart Dishes; 40 per cent believed that customers came to their restaurants because they were ESRs; and 24 per cent said that sales had increased since their restaurants became ESRs.

Dr Chan said, "When eating out, the majority of the public will consider the price, taste and location of the restaurants, hence the enhanced ESR Star + Campaign has developed a new star system to classify participating restaurants into one-star, two-star or three-star ESRs. We hope that the new system can attract more restaurants to become starred eateries to provide a wider variety of 'More Fruit and Vegetables' and '3 Less' dishes, as well as introduce promotional offers for the EatSmart Dishes, so that members of the public can enjoy tasty and healthier dishes at different locations with a discounted price when eating out."

Under the Campaign's new star system, a green star indicates that the restaurant offers "More Fruit and Vegetables" dishes on a daily basis; a red star means that the restaurant offers both "More Fruit and Vegetables" dishes and "3 Less" dishes with less oil, salt and sugar on a daily basis; and a yellow star means that the restaurant has a daily promotional offer (EatSmart Promotion) for "More Fruit and Vegetables" dishes or "3 Less" dishes. A restaurant becomes a three-star ESR by obtaining all green, red and yellow stars.

More information on the EatSmart Restaurant Star + Campaign is available at the thematic website (restaurant.eatsmart.gov.hk), a newly launched Facebook fanpage (www.facebook.com/eatsmartrestaurant.dh) and Instagram account (www.instagram.com/EATSMARTRESTAURANT). Members of the public can also download the EatSmart Restaurant mobile app to search for ESRs conveniently when eating out.