Are you excited about adding whole food, plant-based (WFPB) meal items to your menu, but wondering what WFPB is? As a restaurant owner/manager, you may have been approached by a customer looking for WFPB (or healthy vegan) options. This Info Sheet is for you! By considering the addition of plant-based options, you are already on your way to making great changes that will benefit the health of your customers, and grow your business.

According to Baum and Whiteman International Food and Restaurant Consultant, the demand for healthier food in restaurants will continue increasing. Indeed, 26% of American consumers stated they were eating less meat, and plant-based diets are going mainstream in 2017. Veg-centric dining is growing more than ever, and even steakhouses are "scraping sides and moving vegetables to the middle of the menu." The National Restaurant Association recently reported that "70% of adults say the availability of healthy menu options would make them choose one restaurant over another," so once you make the change, let the PPC Restaurant Campaign help get the word out about this new option(s).

Whole Food, Plant-Based (WFPB) Diet

- When designing WFPB meals, you have an abundance of choices at your fingertips! You can create delicious, healthy meals from a plethora of ingredients, including vegetables, fruits, whole grains, tubers, roots, nuts, legumes/beans, and mushrooms. There is an enormous rainbow of whole foods, herbs and spices that nature has created to satisfy taste buds and fuel the human body.

It is relatively simple to adjust an existing menu or ingredient and offer it as Vegan/WFPB. For example:

- Baked potato or sweet potato with steamed veggies and tofu/tempeh, both of which are plant proteins made from soybeans. Tempeh can be steamed OR marinated in a sauce composed of: tahini, lemon juice, dijon mustard and garlic - or any oil-free sauce/marinade - and heated on a stovetop pan.

- Salad with fresh veggies, beans, nuts, fresh or dried fruit, accompanied by an oil-free dressing

- Brown rice with steamed veggies, avocado and an oil-free cashew dressing

- Create a main dish from sides: steamed or grilled asparagus, broccoli, mushroom, brussel sprouts, brown rice, beans, corn.

- For more suggestions please see *Info Sheet: Plant-based Cooking with No Oil for Restaurants*

What is Avoided, Why it's not Healthy

- **Animal-based foods,** such as: fish and seafood, fowl, and meat. Diets high in animal protein have been correlated with increased heart disease risk, increased all-cause and cancer mortality.[1]

- **Dairy and Egg Products**, such as: eggs, cow's milk or goat's milk, and the cheese, yogurt, butter, and cream products produced from them. Eggs and dairy products have been shown to correlate with increased risk of disease and cancer.[2]

- **Refined and Processed Foods**, such as refined flour, sugar, salt and oil. Highly processed ingredients in a diet correlate with chronic disease, and increase the risk for insulin resistance, colon cancer, vascular disease and weight gain.[3] For refined foods substitutes and tips for cooking without oil please see the *Info Sheet: Plant-based Cooking with No Oil for Restaurants.*

Why Focus on WFPB instead of Vegetarian or Vegan? It's about what's healthiest!

- **Vegan diets:** While vegan diets exclude animal products, they are not necessarily healthy. Vegan diets can include many processed foods and high amounts of oils, sugar, salt and fat.

- **Vegetarian diets:** While vegetarian diets exclude meat and fish, they include eggs and dairy products (such as cow's milk or goat's milk and yogurts and cheeses produced from them). They also typically include highly processed foods with high amounts of sugar, salt, oils and other fat.

Benefits of offering whole food, plant-based (WFPB) menu options:

- Reduced costs: Animal products are expensive and carry a short shelf life vs. plant products (i.e., beans, rice, legumes, nuts) which carry a much longer shelf life.

- Cross utilization: Many items in WFPB dishes can be incorporated into the non-vegan parts of the menu (i.e., vegetables, grains, beans).

- Access to (extremely loyal) guests who would otherwise consider it an off-limits restaurant.

- Promotion by followers/free advertising with apps like HappyCow. Please see *Info Sheet: Maximizing Participation in the Restaurant Campaign via HappyCow* for more information.

- Improves the health of your customers: Plant-based diets are associated with lower risk of heart disease, diabetes, and cancers of the prostate and breast.[4]

- It is environmentally friendly: By including more plant-based menu items you will also be reducing greenhouse gas emissions, ocean pollution, and soil degradation.[5]

1   http://nutritionstudies.org/animal-protein-linked-to-death/
2   http://nutritionstudies.org/provocations-dairy-protein-causes-cancer/
3   http://nutritionstudies.org/whole-food-plant-based-diet-guide/
4   http://nutritionstudies.org/whole-food-plant-based-diet-guide/
5   http://nutritionstudies.org/impact-of-food-choices-on-the-environment/

Resources

- How to use the HappyCow App: *Info Sheet: Maximizing Participation in the Restaurant Campaign via HappyCow.*

- Please see *Info Sheet: WFPB Books & Cookbooks* for recommended reading material.

- Please see *Info Sheet: Minimal Cooking Ideas* for tips on how to prepare simple plant-based meals.

- Please see the *Info Sheet: Plant-Based Cooking with No Oil for Restaurants* for tips on how to prepare delicious meals without the oil.

- Please see the *Info Sheet: PPC's Culinary Philosophy* for more information and what it means to be "PlantPure."

- Please see *Info Sheet: Jumping In and Deepening Your Nutrition Education* to learn more about the nutrition science behind a WFPB diet.

- Visit Nutritionfacts.org for short (5 minute) videos on various topics related to WFPB diets, by Michael Greger, MD.