

National Restaurant Association Announces 'Nutrient Essentials: Sodium and the Healthy Plate'
Conference
2008-06-10

Conference to take holistic approach to the issue of sodium, speakers to address challenges, flavor alternatives, health and public policy

The National Restaurant Association announced today that registration is open for its "Nutrient Essentials: Sodium and the Healthy Plate" conference in Chicago, July 9-11, 2008. Shaping America's Health and the Grocery Manufacturers Association are partners on the conference, which will take a holistic approach to sodium --- from the science of taste and overall diet, to health effects and food safety. The conference will feature a broad range of speakers --- including Terry Mason (Chicago Department of Public Health), Chef Art Smith (TABLE fifty-two in Chicago) and Michael Jacobson (Center for Science in the Public Interest) --- and culinary showcases.

"Sodium has increasingly become a topic of discussion over the past year, and will continue to be a key component of the overall nutrition issue in the year to come," said Dawn Sweeney, President and CEO of the National Restaurant Association. "Sodium is a unique and complex food component from both a culinary and a food manufacturing aspect. While many companies are already working to reduce sodium, our conference will provide a forum to further explore public policy approaches and operational successes, as well as practical experience with flavoring alternatives."

The conference is designed to educate industry professionals about the issues and challenges surrounding sodium, how restaurants are responding, as well as to share knowledge, develop a deeper understanding of sodium's place in the diet and food production. It is open to nutrition, quality assurance, culinary, research and development, marketing and government affairs professionals in the restaurant and foodservice, packaged food and health industries.

"While salt certainly has an important place in the culinary arts, there is a world of flavorful ingredients available to chefs and culinarians to create healthful and flavorful dishes without using it to excess," said Jim Hill, PhD, Chair of Shaping America's Health. Hill adds, "We believe the Nutrient Essentials Conference will foster a better understanding of the key issues around the healthy plate and provide a platform for restaurants to expand healthy options on their menu without sacrificing the flavor their guests have come to expect."

"I am proud of the efforts of food manufacturers to reformulate their products to reduce the amount of salt," said Cal Dooley, GMA President and CEO. "The industry has made great progress and we are committed to continuing our efforts to provide consumers with great tasting and lower sodium products that help them reach dietary goals and live healthy lives."

Topics of panel discussions, education sessions and roundtables will include:

- Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Consumer tastes and preferences
- Consumer understanding of health issues
- The science behind government recommendations
- Successes and challenges across the supply chain
- Culinary techniques and flavor opportunities

The conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency Chicago, July 9 to 11, 2008. Sponsorship opportunities are available. To view the full conference agenda and register to attend, visit www.restaurant.org/events/nutrition.

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