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Background

Unhealthy eating habit is closely linked to the development of obesity and increases the risk of chronic diseases including heart diseases, cerebrovascular diseases, diabetes and some cancers, which accounted for about 60% of all registered deaths in Hong Kong in 2017.

Food premises are important partners in healthy eating promotion as eating out is common among Hong Kong people. According to the Population Health Survey 2014/15 conducted by the Department of Health (DH), over 80% of persons aged 15 or above reported eating out (including breakfast, lunch and dinner as a whole) at least once a week. Analysed by age group, 65% of persons aged 15 to 34 reported that they ate out for lunch 5 times or more a week. Another study conducted in 2016 showed that over 90% of the respondents preferred to have healthier options in the menus when they were eating out. Over 70% of them considered the food they consumed contained too much oil and fat, whereas over 60% considered the food contained too much salt. The study also found that over 70% of the respondents considered the portion of vegetables provided was not enough, with more than 80% reckoning the portion of fruit provided was inadequate.

The DH has launched the “EatSmart@restaurant.hk” Campaign (ESR Campaign) since April 2008,

whereby the public can easily savour the “EatSmart Dishes” which include “More Fruit and Vegetables” dishes and “3 Less” dishes (less fat or oil, salt and sugar) when eating out. The DH also set up a Campaign Task Force (the Task Force) comprising members from the government, catering industry, academia and relevant professional groups. The Task Force sets up goals and roadmaps for the Campaign, provides strategies and ways to achieve the goals, and seeks support from stakeholders for the Campaign. Through these, collaborations among different sectors will be promoted.

It has been more than ten years since the ESR Campaign was launched. To encourage restaurants to provide a wider choice of healthy dishes and assist members of the public in putting healthy eating into practice, the DH launched the “EatSmart Restaurant Star+” Campaign (ESR Star+ Campaign) as the enhanced version of the ESR Campaign in 2019. Under a new star-rating scheme, EatSmart Restaurants (ESRs) will be classified into one-star, two-star or three-star.

We encourage restaurants to embrace the trend of healthy eating and nutritional cooking by creating signature “EatSmart Dishes”, which give the public a wider range of healthier choices. By joining the ESR Star+ Campaign, you can attract more customers who are health-conscious.

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About the Guidebook

This Guidebook, first issued in 2007 and subsequently revised in 2015, aims to set out the conditions for participating in the ESR Campaign as well as the nutritional criteria of “EatSmart Dishes” (i.e. “More Fruit and Vegetables” dishes and “3 Less” dishes). Such criteria of “EatSmart Dishes” were established after making references to overseas experience and local circumstances, as well as consulting various government departments, professional groups, academia and catering industry. The practicability of these criteria has been confirmed.

To tie in with the newly launched ESR Star+ Campaign, the DH has revised this Guidebook to introduce a brand new star-rating scheme and list out the terms and conditions of the Campaign.

