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JOIN THE FREDERICK RESTAURANT CHALLENGE

Every year Americans consume more of their meals and calories from restaurant fare. Consumers eat out for taste, convenience and entertainment. Foods at restaurants are typically higher in calories than foods prepared at home. Studies have shown a positive association between the number of restaurants in a geographic area and higher levels of obesity. Thus the cliché...”If you build it they will come,” really holds true for dining out.

This month Frederick dining customers will have a healthier option. The Frederick County Diabetes Coalition, which I am proud to be an active member of, is coordinating the *Frederick Restaurant Challenge* for November, Diabetes month. The *Challenge* includes restaurants who have agreed to offer a healthy meal option for people with diabetes, or for anyone wishing to eat healthier.

Six restaurants are participating in the Challenge - Acacia, Brewer’s Alley, Café 611, Café Anglais, Firestone’s Culinary Tavern and La Paz. All healthy meal options were analyzed by a Registered Dietitian to confirm it meets the nutritional criteria. The criteria, based on guidelines established by the American Association of Diabetes Educators, the American Diabetes Association and the National Cholesterol Education Program, is 550 calories or less, 45-60 grams of carbohydrate, 750 mg of sodium or less, no more than 18 grams of fat (including no more than 5 grams of saturated fat), and 0 grams of trans fat.

The Diabetes Coalition applauds these participating restaurants for taking a progressive step forward in offering our community delicious and healthy meal options. Diabetes is a serious health problem that is growing rapidly. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, if current trends continue, 1 in 3 Americans will develop diabetes sometime in their lifetime, and those with diabetes will lose, on average, 10–15 years of life. Environmental changes are widely recognized as vital to supporting those who are striving to live a healthier lifestyle, and the *Frederick Restaurant Challenge* is excited to be a part of this growing trend.

This innovative project is a collaborative effort of the Frederick County Diabetes Coalition, the Frederick Memorial Healthcare System, the American Diabetes Association, the Office of Economic Development and the Downtown Frederick Partnership. Together these groups are joining hands to make a healthier Frederick County.

Support the *Challenge* by making these six restaurants your dining preference this month. Diners who choose the healthy meal will have the chance to rate their meal and will be eligible to win one of the fabulous prizes. What a great motivation to select the healthy meal option. Prizes include a gift card for the shoe store *If the Shoe Fits*, a Diabetes cookbook, a 30-minute massage from the FMH Wellness Center and a gift certificate to the winning restaurant of the *Challenge*. The restaurant whose healthy meal receives the highest rating will receive an award to proudly display.

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