



Dear School City of East Chicago,

Sodexo was recently profiled on a website called, "[Is It Bad for You.](#)" The site published an article titled, "[Is Sodexo's Food Bad You?](#)" and it gave Sodexo's food a failing grade. This article has been shared on social media and in student newspapers/sites.

With this in mind, we felt it was important to reaffirm Sodexo's commitment to promote and encourage healthier choices that improve Quality of Life for the millions of people we serve. This includes providing balanced meal options at schools and offering food choices that have less sugar, salt and fat.

Sodexo is committed to supporting the health and well-being of the 15 million people we serve in North America. We are the world's largest employer of registered dietitians (RDs), employing over 500 RDs across the United States. These RDs work closely with Sodexo's culinary team to develop balanced, fresh menus and provide consumers with the nutritional information and tools to make healthy choices.

As a result, we were very concerned about the claims made in the "Is It Bad for You?" article. With this in mind, we wanted to provide you with the facts that address many of the false claims stated on the website.

Claim: "Sodexo is not healthy...The food may sound healthy but it is heavily processed and high in carbohydrates, fat, and chemicals."

Fact: Sodexo was chosen as the Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA) Partner of the Year in 2016 for our efforts in health and well-being, particularly in schools, universities and leisure destinations. Further, as part of our commitments to providing healthy options, Sodexo has eliminated an estimated five tons of salt and 14 tons of sugar from the food we serve since the introduction of Mindful in 2013, an evidence-based wellness program, stressing healthy indulgence rather than deprivation.

Claim: "Unfortunately, many children complain that they are not getting enough food on their plates. Some of the 'enticing names' are simply the same old stuff in disguise. For example, if your child orders the orange chicken (or other Chinese food options), they can expect to receive some chicken nuggets from the prior day doused in orange sauce."

Fact: Sodexo partnered with the Cornell Center for Behavioral Economics in Child Nutrition Programs on the Smarter Lunchrooms movement to help instill healthy eating behaviors in children. This movement encourages students to make healthy choices by making it easier to find fresh produce in the lunch line and serving healthy foods in more appealing ways. A pilot program, conducted among several of Sodexo's school accounts by Cornell, found that the Smarter Lunchrooms program led to a 21 percent increase in vegetable consumption and 14 percent increase in fruit consumption when compared with students in schools that did not participate in the program.

Claim:
“The

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chicken nuggets are still the heavily processed chicken nuggets that more [sic] unhealthy than those served at some fast food places. Many of the products have the appearance of healthy [sic] but are far from it.”

Fact: A six-ounce serving of Sodexo chicken nuggets (450 calories, 23 g protein, 29 g fat, 24 g carbohydrate) provides nutritional value similar to a typical serving of chicken nuggets as reported by the USDA National Nutrient Database.

Further, Sodexo continuously strives to offer students healthy options. We recently began using a student-approved mushroom-beef burger blend in our school menus. This action alone removed 250 million calories and 304 million milligrams of sodium from student meals each year. This is just one example of how Sodexo strives to provide healthier meals for students.

Claim: “As recently as 2013, all Sodexo sourced frozen beef products in the UK were removed from the market due to the discovery of horse DNA in a sample. Though horse is a delicacy in some countries, it is not acceptable to list any item as beef that is not beef.”

Fact: Sodexo operations in the U.S. do not source beef products from Europe; all of our raw and frozen ground beef products are sourced domestically. Further, rigorous United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) guidelines and inspection procedures do not allow for horsemeat to be imported or processed for human consumption, and the USDA is on record calling potential impact of the horsemeat issue on the U.S. marketplace ‘remote.’

Claim: “Due to the fact that Sodexo serves so many different organization [sic] with so many food options, it is difficult to find an elaborate ingredients lists. However, the majority of the food is highly processed and shipped frozen to the destination.”

Fact: Sodexo purchases food locally as often as possible. In the U.S., we purchase ingredients from 1,400 small produce farms, 1,430 small dairy farms and more than 500 local bakeries, and use these ingredients in the same state or region. For example, we purchase more than 37 million gallons of locally sourced milk each year. Additionally, ingredient information for recipes and sub-recipes is available on request, and Sodexo’s Bite app provides complete nutritional information on every item served.

After reviewing and addressing the unsubstantiated claims, Sodexo staunchly believes the article is without merit.



However, in today's news and social media environment, it's becoming increasingly difficult for consumers to sort out truths from falsehoods. Information about health and nutrition is everywhere. Websites that feature sound, science-based content from reliable sources co-exist with sites containing questionable, inaccurate or alarming information not supported by facts or authored by credentialed experts.

We welcome any questions you may have about Sodexo's health and well-being offerings.

Kind regards,

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