



For Immediate Release  
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## Mushroom Council Partners with Sodexo to Promote Blend Burgers and Encourage Produce Consumption

*Sodexo's Switch to Blend Burgers will Reduce Fat, Calories and Sodium of Millions of Meals*

Redwood Shores, CA – (February 9, 2016) – Sodexo, a leader in delivering sustainable, integrated facilities management and foodservice operations, announced they will be switching the all-beef burgers sold to their K-12 school district accounts to the meat and mushroom Blend burger. This change supports better nutrition for students in more than 250 school districts and aligns with Sodexo's commitment to enhance student well-being. Lisa Feldman, director of culinary services for Sodexo Culinary Solutions, commented, "Recent studies tell us that kids are taking more fresh fruits and vegetable at school meals, but not necessarily eating them. In addition to our work incorporating [behavioral economics principles](#) into our school nutrition programs to encourage students to both take and consume more fruits and vegetables, Sodexo is also looking at ways to add produce to other things we serve like adding natural and nutrient-packed mushrooms to burgers." Feldman added, "The mushrooms blend seamlessly with the meat making the burger absolutely kid approved – in fact, most students are either happy with the change or don't even notice it. Also, parents are thrilled we are serving a healthier, natural burger to their kids." The Blend burger contains fewer calories, fewer grams of saturated fat and fewer milligrams of sodium compared to the standard burger for schools. Given the 7 million monthly estimated purchases at Sodexo cafeterias, **the company estimates this move will result in a savings of more than 250 million calories, 38 million grams of fat, 15 million grams of saturated fat and 304 million milligrams of sodium from student meals each month.**





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The Mushroom Council has been working with Sodexo on the introduction of the Blend for several years. Sodexo coordinated dozens of pilots to test the Blend burger with students to ensure a seamless transition. When tested with students before the nationwide rollout, 85% of students preferred Blend burgers over the previous burger. “We are extremely impressed with Sodexo’s commitment to serving their students healthier burgers while featuring produce at the center of the plate,” comments Council President Bart Minor. “We look forward to seeing this momentum continue in the K-12 market.”

To coincide with the launch of the Blend burger, Sodexo and the Mushroom Council designed marketing collateral featuring the Eat Brighter campaign developed by the Produce Marketing Association and Sesame Workshop as a part of their commitment to the Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA). The campaign was developed to encourage children to eat more fruits and vegetables by positioning popular Sesame Street characters on packages, posters and promotional materials. The custom materials developed for Sodexo elementary schools include posters and salad bar clings encouraging students to eat their fruits and vegetables.



Additional Sodexo segments are also utilizing the Blend to provide more nutritious burgers for their customers. Northwestern Dining, part of Sodexo’s University segment, participated in the James Beard Foundation’s Blended Burger Project, the national campaign challenging chefs across the country to blend mushrooms with ground meat for a “better” burger. Executive Chef Chris Studtmann blended 50% beef and 50% fresh mushrooms in a four-ounce burger to improve the flavor, texture and juiciness while also reducing calories, fat and sodium intake. Chef’s Better Burger Patty had 34% fewer calories, 38% less fat and half the cholesterol.

Sodexo and the Mushroom Council are both partners with PHA, the organization committed to working with the private sector to make healthier choices easier for busy parents and families and ensure the health of our nation’s youth.

**About The Mushroom Council:**

*The Mushroom Council is composed of fresh market producers or importers who average more than 500,000 pounds of mushrooms produced or imported annually. The mushroom program is authorized by the Mushroom Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Act of 1990 and is administered by the Mushroom Council under the supervision of the Agricultural Marketing Service. Research and promotion programs help to expand, maintain and develop markets for individual agricultural commodities in the United States and abroad. These industry self-help programs are requested and funded by the industry groups that they serve.*