

FISH

facts & fancies

Learn How To Easily “Eye & Buy” Fresh Fish

(NAPSA)—A new survey by Harris Interactive® revealed that almost half (47 percent) of all adult Americans consume more seafood now than they did five years ago. The survey, commissioned by Red Lobster, also discovered that almost seven in ten Americans (68 percent) say the reason they eat more seafood is because it is a welcome alternative to meat and chicken. Furthermore, many are eating it for the health benefits—almost two in five Americans (39 percent) eat seafood because of recent studies that show that consuming seafood is healthy for your heart.

Freshness is the key to preparing delicious seafood. Selecting the best fresh fish is easy once you know what to look for. Red Lobster Executive Chef Keith Keogh offers some tips to help “eye and buy” seafood:

- The fish’s eyes should be clear. If the eyes are cloudy, the fish was probably harvested more than five days ago and is beginning to get old.

- The fish’s interior gills should be bright red. If the gills are pink or brownish gray, the fish has either been mishandled or is getting old, indicating the quality of the fish may be poor.

- There should be no offensive odor. Fresh fish does not smell bad. Generally speaking, it should smell moist and fresh, like a cut cucumber or melon. If there is an unusual odor, the fish is probably old and should not be purchased.

- The fish’s flesh should be firm and elastic to the touch—it should “spring back” in place. If



“Eye and buy” fresh fish for heart health.

an indentation remains after the fish is touched, the fish is beginning to get soft and is probably old.

- Fresh fillets or steak cuts should look moist and firm. Check for gapping, or the separating of flesh in a fillet that indicates the fish is getting old. While the layers of meat should not separate or “gap,” a minor amount is acceptable. A large degree of separating and soft flesh, however, is a good indication that the fillet should not be consumed.

- Don’t forget to check for bruises. Dark red spots that appear on fillets indicate bruises, which are caused by mishandling. These fillets are still edible, but do not measure up to the highest quality standards.

“Seafood is popular because it can be prepared in so many creative ways,” said Keogh. “Seafood can be prepared spicy or mild, grilled or sautéed, with a cream sauce or plain. It can be made as an Asian stir-fry or as a Spanish paella. There are very few other types of food that allow you to be so creative.”