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## Houlihan's introduces antibiotic-free chicken

Casual-dining chain also rolls out organic greens

Bret Thorn

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# H HOULIHAN'S

Casual-dining chain Houlihan's Restaurants has introduced antibiotic-free chicken and organic greens to its three St. Louis-area units.

Houlihan's senior vice president of marketing, Jen Gulvik, said that the restaurant's customers

were looking for more organic items and food from animals raised without the use of antibiotics or added hormones.

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"Houlihan's has always been a progressive restaurant in tune with its customers and consumer trends," Gulvik said in a press release. "We're known for having a great variety in our menu that reflects different lifestyles — from small to large portions, vegetarian fare, low-cal and indulgent items."

According to Houlihan's website, the chicken is certified natural by the United States Department of Agriculture and is not treated by antibiotics, is fed a 100 percent vegetarian diet, is raised cage-free on independently owned farms. The chicken is also certified by Global Animal Partnership's 5-Step Animal Welfare Rating Standards program.

No chickens in the United States are treated with hormones.

The chain's St. Louis location's iceberg and romaine lettuce, kale, spinach, arugula, chard and baby greens are all USDA certified organic and supplied by Earthbound Farm Organics of San Juan Bautista, Calif., and Foxy, a produce company based in Salinas, Calif.

The 83-unit chain already offers an organic kale-spinach-chard blend as part of a lemon and herb grilled chicken dish on its current seasonal specials menu introduced in February.

In a press release announcing the new items, Houlihan's quoted Technomic Inc., senior marketing research analyst Peter Napathalung as saying it is the first major casual-dining chain to offer both organic and antibiotic-free items.

"Competition is becoming increasingly challenging, and these offerings hit on a variety of important consumer touch points to help Houlihan's gain share of stomach," Napathalung said.

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