COCONUT CHEESECAKE
Yield: 10 servings

Cooking spray
2 cups crushed coconut cookies
¼ cup sugar
¼ cup butter, melted
3 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
½ cup sugar
6 eggs
1 (15-ounce) can cream of coconut
1 ½ cups fresh frozen coconut, thawed
½ cup sweetened shredded coconut, toasted*

Evenly coat the bottom and sides of a 9-inch springform pan with cooking spray, set aside. Combine crumbs, sugar and butter in a small bowl, mix completely. Firmly press into the bottom and 1-inch up sides of prepared pan. Bake crust in a preheated 350⁰F for 8-10 minutes; let cool in pan. Reduce oven temperature to 325⁰F. In a large mixing bowl, beat cream cheese with electric mixer, gradually adding sugar. Add eggs, 2 at a time, beating well after each addition. Stir in cream of coconut and thawed coconut. Pour batter into prepared crust. Bake at 325⁰ F until cheesecake looks almost set, but still shakes slightly in center or about 50-60 minutes. Remove from oven and let stand for 10 minutes. Sprinkle toasted coconut around rim of cheesecake or in center if desired. Cool and chill for 8 hours or overnight. Carefully run a thin bladed knife around the rim of the cheesecake; loosen the outside of the pan. Carefully run a long, sharp knife under the crust of the pan to loosen. Carefully transfer cheesecake to serving plate. If desired, serve with a strawberry, raspberry or chocolate sauce or just garnish with toasted coconut and fresh fruit.

*To toast coconut, preheat oven to 350⁰F. Spread sweetened shredded or flaked coconut on a rimmed baking sheet and bake, stirring once or twice, until golden, about 5 to 10 minutes. If toasting sweetened coconut, check and stir more frequently because the added sugars can cause irregular browning.

Nutrition information per serving: 608 *calories; 42 g total fat ; 29 g saturated fat; 2 g polyunsaturated fat; 8 g monounsaturated fat; 178 mg cholesterol; 329 mg sodium; 53 g carbohydrate; 2 g dietary fiber; 8 g protein; 957 IU Vitamin A; 11 IU Vitamin D; 27 mcg folate; 75 mg calcium; 1 mg iron*