



What's in Your Food?

Session plan for group leader

About this session:

What's in Your Food?: This session provides participants with an overview of healthy eating. It explores food composition and dietary guidelines.

By the end of this session participants will have had the opportunity to:

- Learn about food composition
- Discuss healthy food choices
- Review food and activity diaries
- Set goals for the week

To do before this session:

- Review the [Introduction to Group Sessions](#). This provides an overview of facilitating groups and offers guidance on group size, format, etc.
- Review the following fact sheets (these fact sheets should help inform you prior to facilitating this session. Do not overload participants with reading materials, instead use this knowledge to facilitate discussion):
 - http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/grains_why.html
 - http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/vegetables_why.html
 - http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/fruits_why.html
 - http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/milk_why.html
 - <http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/meat.html>
 - <http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/oils.html>
- Organize materials for the session:
 - Paper, pens, flip chart/white board
 - MyPyramid mini poster
<http://www.mypyramid.gov/downloads/MiniPoster.pdf>
 - MOVE! handouts:
 - [S06 Making Healthy Food Choices](#)
 - [N01 All Foods Can Fit](#)

Introduction (may take 15-20 minutes):

- Conduct individual weigh-in in private (can also be done at the end of the session). Weights need to be entered into the CPRS Vitals Signs package.
- Welcome everyone to the class.
- Revisit ground rules for the session (set new rules if appropriate)
- Invite participants to discuss their progress/goals since the last class.
- Facilitate problem-solving for barriers.
- Discuss any homework from the last class.
- Discuss the purpose of today's session:
 - Learn more about what's in your food
 - Discuss healthy food choices
 - Discuss using your food diary
 - Decide on new goals for the next session
- Encourage questions and comments.

Exercise 1: Food composition and dietary guidelines

- Write “Why does food choice matter?” on a board and ask for comments.
- Display the MyPyramid mini poster. Use the MyPyramid fact sheets (links provided above) to explain the different food groups. Do not distribute these fact sheets (unless you feel it’s appropriate); rather, use them to inform yourself in order to provide participants with basic understanding of the different food groups and their importance. Making this part of the session interactive is challenging because its primary function is to provide information. Try to involve participants by keeping it brief and asking for input and questions.
- Having just discussed the importance of the food groups *MOVE!* handout [S06 Making Healthy Food Choices](#) will make for interesting discussion. Distribute the handout. Ask participants to look at their food diary from the previous week and **circle those foods which they think fall under the fats, salt, sugars and alcohol category**. Ask if they have lots of circles. Discuss how they might:
 - Focus on fruits
 - Vary their veggies
 - Get calcium rich foods
 - Make at least half their grains “whole grains”
 - Go lean with protein
 - Know their limits on fats, salt, sugars and alcohol

This is particularly useful because it encourages participants to think about dietary guidelines and how they relate to the foods in their individual diets.

- Ask participants to consider which of their circled items they would be willing to cut back on or eliminate.
- Distribute *MOVE!* handout [N01 All Foods Can Fit](#). Use this handout to summarize and give perspective to the guidelines just discussed.

Physical activity break

Incorporating physical activity into the session reinforces the healthy lifestyle message and provides opportunity to demonstrate some simple but effective exercises.

- Ask participants to join you in doing the following flexibility exercise:



CHEST STRETCH: Extend your arms behind you with elbows straight. Interlock your fingers if possible. Gently lift your elbows upward. You should feel a stretch in your chest.

Exercise 2: Record keeping

- Ask participants to take out their food and activity diary. Reinforce the message that the diary is a self-management tool, and that **keeping track of everything you eat and drink and the amount of physical activity you take is the most important thing you can do to help change eating and physical activity behavior.**
- Suggest that participants complete the diary at the end of each day. Even better, suggest that they carry their diary with them and complete it at each meal/snack.
- Explain the diary headings and how best to complete each section.
- Discuss keeping a diary using the following principles:
 - Be honest
 - Be accurate
 - Be complete
- Remind participants that the diary is a personal tool. It's O.K. for a participant to choose not to share his/her information.
- Use the following to explain the hunger/fullness column of the food diary:

You should only eat until you are satisfied or full, not too full. In order to manage how much you eat and your weight, you need to listen to your body. Use the scale below to help determine how hungry you are. Stop eating 2 or 3 times during each meal to ask yourself if you are still hungry or starting to feel satisfied. Feelings of satisfaction or fullness do not happen right away so eating slowly can help. After you finish eating, check again to see how full you are. You never want to be too hungry or too full. It is best to stay between 3 and 7 on the scale.

| Rating | Hunger / Fullness Feelings |
|--------|---|
| 10 | Uncomfortably full or "sick" – "Thanksgiving full" |
| 9 | Stuffed and uncomfortable |
| 8 | Too full, somewhat uncomfortable |
| 7 | Full, but not yet uncomfortable – hunger is gone |
| 6 | Filling up, but still comfortable – could definitely eat more |
| 5 | Neutral – neither hungry nor full |
| 4 | Slightly hungry, faint signals that your body needs food, but you can still wait to eat |
| 3 | Hungry, not yet uncomfortable, clear signals that your body needs food |
| 2 | Very hungry, irritable or anxious – you want to eat everything in sight |
| 1 | Starving, feeling weak, lightheaded, dizzy, or other extremely uncomfortable symptoms of hunger |

- If they have not already done so, ask participants to start recording a hunger/fullness number before and after each meal. Ask the group to consider their scores and identify where and how they can begin to make changes.
- Plan to review food and activity diaries at each session. The “goal met” section can be used as a quick-check for progress and problem areas.

Exercise 3: Goals for the next session

- Ask participants to name one or two things that they plan to do for the coming week. Suggest they consider doing something that they learned at today’s session. Encourage participants to write their goal/s in their food and activity diary.

Close the session:

- Remind participants to:
 - Maintain their food and activity diaries,
 - Wear their pedometers, and
 - Bring both the diaries and the pedometers to all of the sessions.