

Choose Wisely: Your Health Depends on It

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Leader's Guide

Educational Goals

Participants will be motivated to:

- Change the way they think about food and better understand the importance of healthy eating rather than following fad diets.
- Realize that a proper balance of carbohydrates, fats, and proteins is essential to good health, appropriate weight, and resistance to disease.
- Use the core principles of MyPyramid and the Nutrition Facts label as tools to make informed, healthy food choices.

Intended Audiences

- FCE groups
- Consumer study groups
- Individual study

Suggested Introduction Ideas

Introduce the session with one or more of the following questions along with ideas from the paragraphs below:

- What do you think of when someone mentions the word diet?
- Do you think that you can eat healthy and still have the foods you enjoy most?
- How often do you compare the Nutrition Facts labels when you are food shopping?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, physical inactivity and unhealthy eating contribute to obesity and a number of chronic diseases such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, arthritis-related disabilities, and some cancers.

These statistics are familiar to many who have already tried dieting without lasting results. Is there a better way?



Healthy eating is less about dieting and more about a new way of thinking about food. It involves learning to use some available tools to make informed choices that promote health and resistance to disease. The goal of this lesson is to share some comparisons of food choices and empower participants with strategies to help them begin a lifestyle of wiser food choices.

Suggested Program Preparation

1. Review the leader's guide and the fact sheet *Choose Wisely: Your Health Depends on It* (MF2826).
2. Review suggested Web sites, particularly the MyPyramid, Dietary Guidelines, and Nutrient Rich Foods sites.
3. Collect copies of the fact sheet and any props, handouts, or information needed to conduct teaching activities selected. Make copies if needed.

Suggested Teaching Activities

1. Teach participants the lesson based on the *Choose Wisely: Your Health Depends On It* fact sheet.
2. Distribute a variety of Nutrition Facts labels to the group and discuss how to compare the facts on the food labels of packaged foods to help make wise food choices.
3. Sample ice cream, light ice cream, and frozen yogurt of a particular brand to compare taste. Have participants guess which one is which before disclosing actual facts.
4. Collect appropriate potato chip bags as visuals to use with the chart on page 2 of the fact sheet. Point out the size of the bag and ask participants how often someone might eat the whole bag regardless of how many servings are suggested on the package. Discuss more healthy yet tasty alternatives to regular chips.
5. Download dietary information of menu items from chain restaurants and challenge participants to use the information to select foods for a meal that supplies one third of their suggested daily calorie allowance as indicated on *MyPyramid.gov*. Encourage them to consider nutrient-richness of foods selected. Or, select a day's worth of balanced meals, if time allows.
6. Use the Fast Food Meal Comparisons Discussion Sheet on page 3 of the leader's guide to lead a discussion about making wise choices at fast food restaurants to reinforce basic concepts from the lesson.
7. Review a popular fad diet and compare it with *MyPyramid.gov*.
8. Prepare half sheets of paper entitled "Steps To a Healthier Me" and encourage participants to write down at least one personal goal they plan to achieve as a result of hearing the information presented.

Suggested Community Awareness Activities

- Present this program to already established community groups such as social clubs, service organizations, or church groups.
- Sponsor a booth or display at a local county fair, health fair, Walk Kansas event, or other upcoming community event.

Helpful Web Sites

www.MyPyramid.gov

www.nutrientrichfoods.org/documents/toolkit.pdf

www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/

www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/foodlab.html

www.nutrition.gov

www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/

www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/html/brochure.htm

Most chain restaurants have Web sites which include dietary information. Do a search to find dietary information for restaurants in your area.

Answers for Discussion Questions

1. Calories in Meal Example 1 are most of her daily allowance. Examples 3 and 4 are wiser choices.
2. Meal Examples 3 and 4 fit best into her daily eating plan.
3. Meal Examples 3 and 4 supply the most nutrient-rich carbohydrates.
4. Meal Examples 3 and 4 are overall wiser choices.

Fast Food Meal Comparisons Discussion Sheet

It is tempting to overeat and to choose less healthful foods when eating out. However, wiser fast food choices can save hundreds of calories per meal in addition to adding vital nutrients. Compare these examples of meal choices from a popular fast food restaurant, and discuss the questions below.

	Serving Size (oz)	Calories (g)	Fat (g)	Carbs (g)
Meal Example 1				
Double Quarter Pounder with Cheese	9.8	740	42	40
Large French Fries	6.0	570	30	70
Totals	15.8	1310	72	110
Meal Example 2				
Double Cheeseburger	5.8	440	23	34
Medium French Fries	4.0	380	20	47
Totals	9.8	820	43	81
Meal Example 3				
Grilled Chicken Sandwich	8.0	420	10.0	51
Side Salad	3.1	20	0	4
Low-fat Italian Dressing	1.5	60	2.5	8
Totals	12.6	500	12.5	63
Meal Example 4				
Grilled Chicken Salad	12.3	320	9.0	30
Low-fat Italian Dressing	1.5	60	2.5	8
Totals	13.8	380	11.5	38

Source: McDonald's Web site http://www.mcdonalds.com/app_controller.nutrition.index1.html

Discussion Questions

1. If a moderately active female, age 53, burns approximately 1800 calories per day, how well do the total calories in Meal Example 1 fit into her eating plan? Which meal choices have more appropriate amounts of calories for one meal?
2. If up to 30 percent of our daily calorie allowance can come from fats, which of the meal examples would fit best into the daily eating plan of the female in question 1?
(30 percent of 1800 calories = 540 calories. 540 calories divided by 9 calories per gram of fat = up to 60 grams of fat per day.)
3. Nutrient-rich foods are a wise choice because they are higher in nutrients such as fiber, vitamins and minerals, and lower in fat and sugar, thus offering more nutrition per calorie. Which of the meal examples would supply the most nutrient-rich carbohydrates?
4. Considering the dietary information given, which of the meal examples are overall wise choices for the female in Question 1?

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Participant Survey

Please take a few minutes to help us by answering the following questions.

Date _____ Your County/District _____

Are you: Male _____ Female _____

Are you: White, non-Hispanic _____ White, Hispanic _____ African-American/Black _____
Native-American _____ Asian-American _____ Other _____

Your age category is: Teen _____ 20-40 yrs. _____ 41-59 yrs. _____ 60 yrs. and over _____

1. Overall as a result of this program, I learned more about using MyPyramid and the Nutrition Facts label to make more healthful food choices. (Circle one)

No Yes, a little Yes, some Yes, a lot

2. Please specify what you learned today that you did not know or that surprised you:

3. How often do you think you will use the information in this program? (Circle one)

Never Once a year Once a month Once a week Daily

4. How important to you is the information you received today? (Circle one)

Not at all Somewhat Very
1 2 3 4 5

5. After today, how likely are you to consider nutrient richness and overall calories of a food before making your choice? (Circle one)

Not at all Somewhat Very
1 2 3 4 5

6. Before today how likely were you to consider nutrient richness and overall calories of a food before making your choice? (Circle one)

Not at all Somewhat Very
1 2 3 4 5

7. Please write any additional comments here:

Thank you for your time! Leaders, please return surveys to:

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