SMALL CHANGES MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

A nutritious eating education and applicability workshop for adults

Planning Guide for Workshop Leaders

Abundant Health
The United Methodist Church

UMCAbundantHealth.org
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OVERVIEW
Obesity and other diet-related chronic conditions have been on the rise in the United States for decades, and now over 1 in 3 adults nationwide is considered obese.¹

Obesity increases the risk for other chronic diseases as well, including, but not limited to, Type 2 Diabetes and heart disease, though an individual does not have to be obese to be at risk for these conditions. Fortunately, many cases can be prevented through a healthy lifestyle.

Eating a nutritious diet is one of the best steps an individual can take to prevent obesity, obesity related diseases, and improve quality of life overall. However, Americans on average do not eat the recommended amounts of fruits, vegetables or whole grains, but instead exceed the recommended amounts of calories from added sugars, refined grains and sodium, among other less nutritious sources.²

In some cases, this is due to a lack of education – people do not know what they should be eating. Other times, people are not interested in making dietary changes because of common misconceptions.

The Small Changes Make a Big Difference workshop aims to educate adults about nutrition basics, dietary recommendations and dispel some myths – showing that eating well can be delicious and affordable.

Changing dietary habits is challenging, but with dedication and tools, it can be done!

¹ State of Obesity; StateofObesity.org
² US Department of Health and Human Services; HHS.gov
PREPARING FOR A SUCCESSFUL EVENT
WORKSHOP GOAL

By attending this workshop, the congregation and community will develop a deeper understanding of nutrition and diet-related aspects of health; they will also be equipped to adopt healthier eating behaviors in their own lives.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to...

1. Explain why good nutrition is important, specifically regarding vitamins, nutrients and the role they play in our bodies

2. Identify recommendations for a healthy diet using the My Plate criteria

3. Apply healthy eating practices to their own life relating to shopping, budget and recipe modification

INSTRUCTOR NOTES

It may be helpful to prepare all handouts for participants in advance, compiling them into a packet or placing them in a folder. The packets or folders should then be ready for participants upon their arrival, as well as a writing utensil to be used throughout the session. The directions found throughout this guide assume that this has taken place. If you choose not to distribute all handouts as a packet, when you come across the direction to “refer participants to [sheet]” then you should distribute the noted worksheet or handout.

Throughout this workshop, you will come across a directive, “Ask the Group.” When you are instructed to “Ask the Group,” simply read the question provided. These questions are there to facilitate self-reflection and discussion. If there is more than one question, ask the first and allow for responses before continuing to the second.

Overall workshop time: 55 minutes
BEFORE THE LESSON

1. Read through the lesson to familiarize yourself with the material
2. Print all handouts and worksheets for each participant
3. Print the evaluation form for each participant
4. Print the key nutrient information sheets
5. Place the 4 key nutrient information sheets around the room – 1 in each corner
6. Visit and browse the ChooseMyPlate.gov website to familiarize yourself with the information and recommendations

MATERIALS NEEDED

Overall Lesson
- Timer, on a phone or clock, to keep track of time during activities
- Writing utensils – 1 per participant

Activity 1.1 Introduction
- Sticky notes – 3 per participant

Activity 1.2 Puzzle Experts on Key Nutrients
- Key Nutrients Puzzle worksheet – 1 per participant
- Key nutrient information sheets for iron, calcium, vitamin A, and vitamin C – 1 of each

Activity 2.1 Understanding My Plate Recommendations
- My Plate worksheet – 1 per participant

Activity 3.1 Adjusting Traditional Comfort Foods
- Small Changes Recipe Modification worksheet – 1 per each pair of participants
- Easy Substitutions handout – 1 per participant

Activity 3.2 Shopping on a Budget
- 5 Budget Saving Tips handout – 1 per participant

Activity 3.3 Reflect and Wrap Up
- Optional handouts: Quick Tips and Easy Substitutions – 1 each per participant
PART ONE
UNDERSTANDING THE BENEFITS OF GOOD NUTRITION
**ACTIVITY 1.1: INTRODUCTION**

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Do:** Instruct participants to turn to their neighbors and discuss the following questions:

1. **What do you know about nutrition?**
2. **What role does nutrition play in your life?**
3. **Why is it important to eat a nutritious diet?**

Allow 3 minutes for the discussion.

**Ask the Group:** “Will 2 people please share what they talked about with their neighbors?”

**Say:** “The foods we eat play a significant role in our overall health, so it is important we are eating enough of the right ones. Even small changes can make a big difference – for example, swapping out soda with water, and adding one vegetable to every meal. Today we will discuss some of the key nutrients our body needs, the recommendations for a nutritious diet, and ways to apply this knowledge to our own lives.”

**Do:** Tell the group that they have been provided with sticky notes. These are available so that participants can write down questions as the workshop progresses; questions will be discussed at the end of the session.
ACTIVITY 1.2: PUZZLE EXPERTS ON KEY NUTRIENTS

Time: 15 minutes

Say: “Our bodies need a wide range of nutrients and minerals to stay healthy, most of which can be found in the foods we eat. Because there are too many to cover in the short time we have today, we will focus on only 4 key nutrients – vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, and iron. I encourage you all to take some time at home to learn more about the other vitamins and minerals.”

Do: Split participants into groups of four. Instruct them to self-assign one member to be an expert for each nutrient – iron, calcium, vitamin A, vitamin C. Explain the directions:

This activity will work like a puzzle – each member of the group will get a piece of the information, then all members will come together to share what they learned, thus, completing the puzzle. Each group member will go to the corner where the sheet is hanging that notes the nutrient they were assigned. They will take their Key Nutrient worksheets and have 3 minutes to make notes on the information regarding that nutrient. When the 3 minutes are over, you will return to your original group. Each group member will then share what they learned with their group members for 7 minutes. Lastly, one person from each nutrient expert group will share what they learned with the whole group.

Ask the Group: Does anyone want to share their thoughts about this? How feasible does it seem to get these nutrients from your diet?
PART TWO
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A HEALTHY DIET
ACTIVITY 2.1: UNDERSTANDING MY PLATE RECOMMENDATIONS

Time: 10 minutes

Say: We just discussed the importance of nutrients and what they do for our bodies. Nutrition and health experts have taken all this information about what our body needs and created easy-to-understand recommendations for our diets. Previously, these recommendations were known as “The Food Pyramid.” Recently, as nutrition science has progressed, the recommendations have changed.

Ask the Group: Is anyone familiar with the way the current recommendations are presented?

Talk about: The nutrition recommendations are no longer a pyramid. Instead, they are known as “My Plate.” The My Plate set up is easier to understand and helps provide a visual of what our plates should look like at meal times.

Do: Refer participants to the blank “My Plate” worksheet and instruct them to fill out each section of the plate, including the cup, with the food group they believe goes there. Mention that you will be reviewing and correcting any mistakes, so they may want to write their answers small for now so they can easily be adjusted if needed. Hand out the worksheets and allow 3 minutes for participants to fill them out.

At the end of the 3 minutes, show the group the actual My Plate recommendations. If possible, you can pull up the website (ChooseMyPlate.gov) to project the actual web page with the My Plate visual, or simply print out a version of the plate beforehand that is big enough for the group to see, as seen on the next page.

Talk about: The main points of the My Plate recommendations are...

• Half of your plate should be fruits and vegetables.
• One quarter of your plate should be healthy grains, such as brown rice or whole wheat.
• The other quarter of your plate should be a lean protein, such as lean ground beef, turkey, chicken, fish or beans.
• Lastly, every meal should include a serving of dairy, like milk or yogurt.
• It is important to note that even though water is not included in this visual, people should be drinking about 8 cups of water every day to promote health.

Do: Have participants turn to their neighbors to share their thoughts about these recommendations and discuss the questions on the worksheet.
A LOOK AT MY PLATE:

ChooseMyPlate.gov
PART THREE

SMALL CHANGES MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE
ACTIVITY 3.1: MODIFYING FAMILIAR FOODS

Time: 10 minutes

Say: “As we just saw, it is recommended that we eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, healthy grains, and lean proteins. However, it is highly unlikely we are meeting all the requirements with our diets as they are now. We all have our favorite foods and ‘go-to’ meals we make that probably are not fulfilling the recommendations. Like we said before, though, small changes can make a big difference. Eating well does not mean we should cut out all the foods we love, it means being conscious about what we are putting in our bodies and making sure we are getting as much nutrition as we can.”

Ask the Group: What are some small changes you can think of to make your diet more nutritious?

Say: “Those are all good ideas. One way we are going to explore this is by making small modifications to some of our familiar recipes.”

Do: Refer participants to the Small Changes recipe modification worksheet and the Easy Substitutions handout. Split participants into pairs and ask them to think of a recipe they make often that does not meet the nutrition recommendations. Instruct them to discuss and write down alterations they can make to the recipes to increase nutritional value. A non-exhaustive list of examples can be seen on the bottom of the worksheet. Allow 7 minutes for this activity.

At the end of the 7 minutes, have each pair share briefly about their recipe alterations and get group feedback. Open it up to ask the group if they have any other ideas about modifications that could be made to the dish.
ACTIVITY 3.2: SHOPPING ON A BUDGET

Time: 5 minutes

Say: “One common misconception people have about eating healthy is that it costs too much. But eating healthy does not have to be super expensive! There are ways to cut down on costs and make the most of your money to buy nutritious foods for yourself and your family. Here are a few tips on saving money at the grocery store.”

Do: Refer participants to the 5 Budget Saving Tips handout and allow 30 seconds for them to look it over.

Ask the Group: What practices do you have in your life, if any, to help save money on healthy groceries?

Do: Let this discussion carry on, taking multiple responses and encourage participant engagement. If there are no volunteers willing to share, ask instead about questions they may have about tips on the handout.
ACTIVITY 3.3: REFLECT AND WRAP UP

Time: 10 minutes

Do: Recap the topics covered in this session and the group conversations that occurred.

Say: “It is important that we now take this knowledge and do something with it. On the back of your ‘My Plate’ worksheet, I want everyone to write down three goals they have to create a more nutritious diet or three action steps they will take. When you are finished, I want you to share what you wrote with your neighbor, so you can hold each other accountable for your goals.”

Do: When the pairs are finished discussing, address questions they wrote down on sticky notes during the session. Open the questions to the group so that all participants may respond to one another. If no one has an answer to a specific question, keep the sticky note and promise to find out the answer and get back to them.

Before participants leave, ask them to please fill out the voluntary evaluation survey about the session, informing them that their feedback helps the ministry improve and can provide useful guidance for the church. Hand out the evaluation sheets to each participant.
RESOURCES
Our bodies need many nutrients, vitamins and minerals to stay healthy – around 30 of them! Here is information about only 4 of them. Take time to find out more about the others not included on this sheet, learning which foods contain them and why your body needs them. Then, look at your diet. Are you getting all you need? Is a multivitamin supplement something you should consider? Talk to your doctor if you have concerns.
IRON

What does iron do for my body?

- Supports growth and development
- Carries oxygen throughout the body to help muscle and body functions

From what foods do I get iron?

- Lean meat, seafood and poultry
- Iron-fortified breads
- White beans, lentils, spinach, kidney beans, peas
- Nuts and some dried fruits (e.g. raisins)

*Note: plant-based iron is absorbed better when eaten with meat and foods with Vitamin C

What happens if I do not get enough iron?

If an individual does not consume enough iron, they may develop Iron Deficiency Anemia, resulting in less oxygen carried throughout the body. Symptoms include:

- Tiredness
- Lack of energy
- Upset GI system
- Poor memory and concentration
- Weakened immune system

*Note: Those who do not eat meat require greater amounts of iron, as plant-based iron is not as easily absorbed by the body

Information modified from The National Institutes of Health Office of Dietary Supplements.
CALCIUM

What does calcium do for my body?

• Supports bone structure and hardness
• Muscle movement
• Nerve function
• Helps move blood throughout the body
• Supports the release of hormones and enzymes in the body

From what foods do I get calcium?

• Dairy
• Kale and broccoli
• Fish with soft bones you eat, such as canned sardines and salmon
• Fortified cereals, juices, soy beverages, tofu

What happens if I do not get enough calcium?

No obvious symptoms in the short term

Long term consequences:

• Decreased bone mass, which may lead to osteoporosis and bone fractures
• Other symptoms of calcium deficiency include numbness and tingling in the fingers, convulsions and abnormal health rhythms

Information modified from The National Institutes of Health Office of Dietary Supplements.
VITAMIN A

What does vitamin A do for my body?

- Vision support
- Immune system functioning
- Reproduction support
- Helps heart, lungs, kidneys and other organs work properly

From what foods do I get vitamin A?

- Beef liver and other organ meat – limit these foods, as they are high in cholesterol
- Salmon and some other fish
- Green leafy vegetables
- Green, orange and yellow vegetables
- Some fruits: cantaloupe, apricots and mangos
- Dairy products

What happens if I do not get enough vitamin A?

- Deficiency is rare in the U.S.
- If an individual does not get enough vitamin A, they may develop an eye condition that disables them from being able to see in low light
- Deficiency can eventually lead to blindness if not treated

Information modified from The National Institutes of Health Office of Dietary Supplements.
VITAMIN C

What does vitamin C do for my body?

• Serves as an antioxidant, protecting your body from cell damage
• Heals wounds
• Improves iron absorption
• Supports the immune system

From what foods do I get vitamin C?

• Citrus fruits
• Red and green peppers
• Kiwi
• Other fruits and vegetables: broccoli, strawberries, cantaloupe, baked potatoes and tomatoes

What happens if I do not get enough vitamin C?

• Vitamin C deficiency is rare in the U.S.
• If an individual goes many weeks with little or no vitamin C, they may develop scurvy, which is fatal if untreated
  • Symptoms of scurvy: fatigue, swollen gums, skin spotting, joint pain, depression, teeth falling out and anemia

Information modified from The National Institutes of Health Office of Dietary Supplements.
MY PLATE WORKSHEET

USDA My Plate Recommendations for a Nutritious Diet

Directions: Take 3 minutes to fill out what each section of the plate should be before learning the My Plate recommendations. After learning the USDA recommendations, make any changes you need to on the plate you labelled, and take 3 minutes to write in foods that fit into that food group. When you are finished, reflect and discuss with your neighbor.

Some questions to guide your neighbor discussion:

1. How feasible do these recommendations seem to you?
2. Does your plate often, or ever, look like the USDA recommended plate?
3. What changes would you need to make to your diet to fit these recommendations?

More information can be found at ChooseMyPlate.gov.
Small Changes Make a Big Difference!

Small adjustments to familiar foods to increase nutritional value

Familiar Food:

Small Changes:

Possible small adjustments to increase nutritional value of familiar foods

- Use skim milk instead of whole milk
- Low-fat cheese
- Add broccoli or other vegetables to pasta dishes
- Substitute ground turkey for ground beef
5 BUDGET SAVING TIPS for healthy eating that won’t break the bank

01. Make a Plan
   Instead of buying food for new meals every day, plan to have enough for leftovers.

02. Make a List
   After deciding your meals for the week, make a shopping list and stick to it! Write out what you need for meals as well as other food to have on hand. When you go to the store, buy only what is on your list.

03. Buy Off-Brand
   Buying store-brand will almost always save you money on nutritious foods, like canned veggies.

04. Coupons
   Check your weekly ad papers and grocery store website for coupons.

05. Try Canned and Frozen Produce
   If fresh produce is too pricey, go with the canned or frozen options. Just make sure anything canned is in water or 100% fruit juice, never syrup!

For more, visit ChooseMyPlate.gov.
QUICK TIPS Master the art of grocery shopping for a nutritious diet!

Dairy
When buying dairy products, like milk, cheese and yogurt, look for a low-fat or no-fat label! Milk is considered low fat at 1%. If you or your family is having a hard time adjusting to the taste of these products, gradually decrease the fat content, or mix half regular fat products with lower fat options.

Protein
If meat is in your meal plan, purchase lean meat, like ground turkey or chicken. For beef, check if the label says, “lean” – these options will have lower fat. Try cutting costs by eating eggs and beans as a source of protein.

Produce
A healthy diet should be full of produce. When buying fruits and vegetables, fill your cart with “the rainbow.” The different colors of produce indicate different nutrients the food provides to your body, so it is important that you eat a variety of colors every day. To cut costs, buy local, in-season produce – these options will likely be a lower price!

Bread
Look for whole grain products. Check the label to see if whole grains are one of the first ingredients.

TIP: Shop the Perimeter. The outside perimeter of the grocery store is where you are likely to find the freshest options, including produce, refrigerated milk, eggs and meat. Of course, there are some items on the inner aisles you may need, such as peanut butter and canned beans. For the most part, try to spend the bulk of your time on the perimeter of the store. This will help you avoid the temptation of the unhealthy snacks and prepared, boxed foods that are full of sodium and preservatives.
EASY SUBSTITUTIONS FOR HEALTHIER COOKING

Greek yogurt instead of sour cream
When cooking, if a recipe calls for sour cream, try using plain Greek yogurt instead as a high-protein swap.

Spinach instead of lettuce
In salads and other recipes that include lettuce, replace iceberg lettuce with darker greens, like spinach, for more nutrients.

Ground turkey instead of ground beef
Swap ground beef for heart-healthier ground turkey in dishes like burgers and spaghetti.

Applesauce instead of butter
Unsweetened applesauce can replace oils and butters when baking.

Check all of your recipes for conversion amounts.
SESSION EVALUATION

Post-Test Session Evaluation to Further Inform Health Ministries

Thank you for attending this nutrition workshop, and thank you in advance for filling out this evaluation! By doing so, you are helping us learn where our education efforts need to improve and what services our community can benefit from. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability and provide any honest feedback you may have.

1. After attending this workshop, I feel more knowledgeable about nutrition.
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Disagree

2. I understand the role of different nutrients in promoting health.
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Disagree

3. I can recite the My Plate guidelines for a healthy diet.
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Disagree

4. I feel confident in my ability to make healthy choices.
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Disagree

5. When I go to the grocery store, I know ways to eat well without spending too much money.
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Disagree

6. I am leaving this workshop with ideas on how to make my favorite foods healthier.
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Disagree

7. I feel like my church will support me in my decision to eat a healthier diet.
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Disagree

8. I intend to eat a healthier diet.
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Disagree
SESSION EVALUATION

Would you like to know any further information that was not provided in this workshop?

In what ways can the church support you as you incorporate nutrition into your daily life?

*What you have to say is valuable! We appreciate you helping us grow.*