



HOW MUCH FOOD AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY?



TARGET AUDIENCE:
parents with children
2 through 18 years old



GROUP SIZE:
5 to 7
participants



NEEDED TIME:
45
minutes

► SESSION OVERVIEW

This session is intended to help busy parents and caregivers offer appropriate meals and snacks for everyone in their family and encourage physical activity each day. Participants will discuss ways to plan and prepare meals that provide the kinds and amounts of foods recommended for adults and children. Participants will become familiar with how to measure and visualize appropriate amounts of foods using measuring cups and images. The participants will receive three handouts to help them achieve these actions: *Find and Make Healthy Foods In a Snap*; *Watch Your Fats, Sugars, and Sodium*; and *Food and Physical Activity Checklist*. Optional handouts are also suggested to offer additional tips for caregivers and children.

► BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES:

After the session participants will be able to:

- Identify ways to plan and prepare healthier meals.
- Identify and commit to at least one action to get the right amount of foods from all five food groups.
- Identify and commit to at least one action to help family members be physically active during the week.

► KEY MESSAGES:

- Knowing the amount of food to eat from each food group can help you eat enough, but not too much.
- Making food at home can help you control the amount of money you spend on food and what you eat.

DISCUSSION SESSION

► MATERIALS NEEDED FOR SESSION:

- Markers / Nametags
- A food label from a package or recipe. Consider recipes with nutrition information or products with the Nutrition Facts label such as whole-grain cereal, milk, frozen vegetables, or soup.
- Measuring cups and spoons (let participants take home if funds allow)
- Foods to measure such as cooked brown rice, fat-free milk, low-fat yogurt, fruits, vegetables, nuts, vegetable oil, etc. Use food models if real foods are not available.
- A MyPlate mini-poster for each person
- Handouts for parents and caregivers: *Find and Make Healthy Foods in a Snap*; *Watch Your Fats, Sugars, and Sodium*; and *Food and Physical Activity Checklist*
- Optional handout for kids: *MyPlate Snack Tips for Kids*

► OUTLINE OF 45-MINUTE SESSION:

- Welcome and introduction to *How Much Food and Physical Activity?* (5 minutes)
- Discussion group activities (25 minutes)
- Group activity—measure and visualize various amounts of foods (10 minutes)
- Sum up and home activity (5 minutes)

Review the information on the handouts *Find and Make Healthy Foods in a Snap*; *Watch Your Fats, Sugars, and Sodium*; and *Food and Physical Activity Checklist*. For additional background information, review the “Food Groups Overview” at ChooseMyPlate.gov. Each food group section offers detailed information about what’s in the food group, how much is needed, health benefits and nutrients, and additional tips to use as time permits.

► WELCOME TO HOW MUCH FOOD AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY?

Welcome participants and ask them to make their own nametag (first names only). Make sure each has a copy of the handouts *Find and Make Healthy Foods in a Snap*; *Watch Your Fats, Sugars, and Sodium*; and *Food and Physical Activity Checklist*, and a highlighter or pencil. Mention other points of interest as needed, such as the location of restrooms and water fountains.

► BEGIN:

What do you enjoy about feeding your family? Write responses on flipchart.

► DISCUSSION GROUP ACTIVITIES:

Tell the parents and caregivers in the group they will be talking about:

- The right amounts and kinds of foods you and your family need each day to be healthy.
- Tips to help you prepare healthy meals with foods from each food group for everyone in your home.
- The connection between how much you eat and physical activity—each person needs different amounts of food depending on their age, activity level, and gender.

► **ASK:**

What can we do to eat the right amounts and types of food?

(Allow parents and caregivers to share their responses. Offer suggestions such as measure food or track/write down what we eat.)

► **POINT OUT:**

Everyone needs to eat the right amount of food to maintain a healthy weight. Kids need to eat the right kinds of foods to grow. Adults need to eat healthier to reach or maintain a healthy weight and lower their risk of disease such as diabetes and heart disease.

The more we move our bodies, the more likely we are to stay at a healthy weight. Being physically active helps burn off some of the calories we eat. But if we eat too much food, we will gain weight or can't lose weight, even if we are physically active.

► **HANDOUT REVIEW:**

Look at the MyPlate mini-poster to find the right foods from each of the food groups, based on a 2,000-calorie daily food plan.

- Vegetables—Eat 2½ cups
- Fruits—Eat 2 cups
- Grains—Eat 6 ounces
- Dairy—Get 3 cups every day; kids 2 to 8 years old need 2 cups every day
- Protein Foods—Eat 5½ ounces every day

► **ACTIVITY:**

Invite participants to measure foods in recommended amounts for adults or children. Offer paper or plastic plates, cups, and bowls to help participants see the recommended amounts in a real place setting. Allow participants to look at sample food models, if real foods are not available. During the activity, ask participants to share how these amounts compare to the amounts they serve at home.

► **POINT OUT:**

The amount of food your family eats is important. Adults and kids who are not very physically active will need less food. Younger kids (2 to 8 years) may also need a little less food, while growing teenagers may need more food.

Practice measuring food using the measuring cups and spoons. Over time, you will recognize what 1 cup or ½ cup looks like on plates and glasses that you use at home.

► **ASK:**

How do you choose foods for you and your family? (Summarize responses)

► **POINT OUT:**

Taking a few minutes to plan meals that your family will enjoy can help you save time and money. Prepare a shopping list so that you know what you need at the grocery store. Plan your weekly meals based on the foods you include on your list. Focus on buying healthy choices from each food group.

Make meals at home, so that you can control what is in your food. Look for recipes that have fewer ingredients and list nutrition information. Use the Nutrition Facts label on foods or nutrition information on recipes to find choices that are low in calories, saturated fat, sugar, and sodium—choose foods with lower numbers of each. Your SNAP benefits can help to stretch your food dollars so that it's easier to provide healthy meals for your family.

► **HANDOUT REVIEW:**

Review the handouts *Find and Make Healthy Foods in a Snap* and *Watch Your Fats, Sugars, and Sodium* with participants and answer questions from the group.

► **ASK:**

How do you and your family stay physically active? (Summarize responses)

► **POINT OUT:**

Kids 6 years and older need at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Encourage your kids to participate in sports, outdoor activities, and games with friends such as tag. Look for ways that you can move with them by dancing, walking, or doing yard work.

Young children between 2 and 5 years old should play actively throughout the day. Play time helps young children grow and develop. Choose to let them play instead of watching television.

Adults need at least 2½ hours of moderate-intensity physical activity per week. If you are not used to being active, start slow and gradually increase time and intensity as you get stronger. Find ways to be active with your family throughout the day.

► **SUM UP:**

Each day, eat the recommended amounts of foods from each food group. Enjoy ways to be active with your family every day.

During this next week, what actions can you take to eat the recommended amounts of foods and be active?

Ask participants to look at the handout *Food and Physical Activity Checklist*. Read the ideas and ask participants to check the activities they would be willing to try.

► **HOME ACTIVITY:**

Ask participants to commit to one action to get the recommended kinds and amounts of foods during the coming week by highlighting or circling items on the *Food and Physical Activity Checklist* handout. Ask them to do the same for the list of physical activities. Encourage participants to add their own ideas.

Offer the optional handout *MyPlate Snack Tips for Kids* and encourage parents to share what they've learned with their children.

For more information visit
www.ChooseMyPlate.gov/myplateformyfamily.html.



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Food and Nutrition Service
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