



United States Department of Agriculture

# *Eat Smart, Live Strong*

## Nutrition Education for Older Adults



# Eat Smart, Spend Less

In this session, participants explore ways to buy the fruits and vegetables they need within a limited budget.

Session 4

# Session 4

## Welcome!



Welcome to *Eat Smart, Live Strong*. This is one of four fun, social, and interactive sessions. The *Eat Smart, Live Strong* sessions are designed to help older adults adopt two behaviors that may improve their health and overall well-being. The two behaviors are:

- 1 Eat at least 3½ cups of fruits and vegetables every day (1½ cups of fruit and 2 cups of vegetables)
- 2 Participate in at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity most days

Each session guide includes a handout that describes four exercises. With an extra 10 minutes before and after each session, you may lead participants in these exercises as a “warm-up” and a “cool-down.”

The four sessions in this kit are:

Session 1 Reach Your Goals, Step by Step

Session 2 Challenges and Solutions

Session 3 Colorful and Classic Favorites

Session 4 Eat Smart, Spend Less

Each session is designed to address specific ways to help participants adopt the behaviors. To learn more about the behaviors, please see the *Eat Smart, Live Strong Leader’s Guide*.

You can use the session guides “as is” or tailor them to meet your group’s needs. Refer to the Leader’s Guide for tips on adjusting the session to meet the needs of your audience. The sessions are designed to flow nicely together, each session further reinforcing the key behavioral messages. However, you can use the sessions as stand-alone pieces if you do not have the opportunity to provide all four.

## Enjoy!

The sessions are meant to be fun for you – the group leader – and for the participants.

# Eat Smart, Spend Less

## Objectives for Session 4

### Participants will be able to:

- Mention three ways to save money on fruits and vegetables
- Name at least one locally available nutrition resource for which they may be eligible

## Session Overview

- Participants have a chance to practice four simple exercises in an optional 10-minute physical activity “warm-up.”
- In the session:
  - The group reviews the two behaviors and their benefits.
  - Participants report on progress toward their goals.
- Through a price-guessing game, participants share their knowledge and experience saving money on fruits and vegetables, including using locally available nutrition resources.
- Participants repeat the same four simple exercises in an optional 10-minute physical activity “cool-down.” They receive a handout that visually depicts the exercises so they can do them at home.

## How the Session Encourages Behavior Change

- **Awareness:** Identify nutrition assistance programs for which participants may be eligible.
- **Skills and self-confidence:** Participants share strategies for purchasing fruits and vegetables. They see that they – and others like them – can find ways to eat more fruits and vegetables with a limited budget.
- **Peer support:** Participants work together to find creative solutions to the cost challenges by participating in a game.



## Materials



- Pens or pencils for all participants
- A place to write participant responses so all can see:
  - large sheets of paper (flip chart pages), masking tape, and markers; or
  - chalk board and chalk; or
  - white board and erasable markers
- Handouts:
  - Handout 4a: Set Your Goals
  - Handout 4b: Session 4 Exercises
  - Handout 4c: Cost Sheet for Fruits and Vegetables (blank)
  - Handout 4d: Participant Feedback Sheet



## Preparation



- Prior to the session, gather current information about prices and resources. Make a list of current, local prices of fruits and vegetables by reviewing food circulars in the local paper, checking grocery store receipts, and checking prices at farmers' markets. Use a blank copy of Handout 4c to record this information. Look for good values by focusing on:
  - Sale items, including fresh, canned, dried, and frozen fruits and vegetables
  - Store and generic brands of canned or frozen fruits and vegetables
  - In-season fresh fruits and vegetables
  - Bulk or discount items
- In order to compare and contrast these good values with more expensive items, include:
  - Items that are not on sale
  - Brand name of canned or frozen fruits and vegetables
  - Imported and/or out-of-season fresh fruits and vegetables
  - Small cans or containers of fruits and vegetables



You will use this price list to play the game, *The Right Price*, described in this booklet.

- Become familiar with and prepare lists of the nutrition resources available to the older, low-income adults in your community, including:
  - **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.** Know how participants can apply for and obtain benefits. Prepare a list of nearby, authorized retail food stores.
  - **Senior Farmers' Markets.** Know the value of coupons available through the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, which local markets participate, and the months of operation. Check current prices of fruits and vegetables at the local farmers' markets and identify some good values. Be prepared to share contact information.
  - **Food Distribution Programs.** Check current availability of fruits and vegetables – or products that contain fruits and vegetables. Check which foods are available through USDA's Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) and the quantities available to an eligible individual. Be prepared to inform participants about how and where to obtain canned fruits and vegetables and other nutritious foods through CSFP.
  - **Local Meal Programs.** Know the types and quantities of fruits and vegetables in the meals served at congregate meal sites, home-delivered meals, food pantries, or through other local meal programs. Know who is eligible for these programs and be ready with contact information about how to access these programs.
- If possible, obtain samples of foods to use for *The Right Price* game. Bring in items from a variety of sources, including:
  - Sale items from local markets
  - Items available through the Commodity Supplemental Food Program
  - Items from Senior Farmers' Markets
  - Sample fruit and vegetable servings from the day's home-delivered meals offering
  - Fruits and vegetables available through the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
  - Samples of electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards and information about other nutrition assistance programs to share with participants
- If you are unable to obtain actual food items, you may substitute photos from store flyers and newspaper circulars.
- Tailor Handout 4a, *Set Your Goals*. Make a blank "master" photocopy. On this master, fill in the dates for the current or upcoming week before you make copies for participants.
- Make copies of Handouts 4a, 4b, 4c, and 4d, one set for each participant.
- Arrange room so participants sit in a semicircle. If you will use the physical activity segments, set straight-back, firm chairs in a semicircle at least 2 feet apart.

## Optional Physical Activity Warm-Up

In addition to talking about the value of physical activity, you have the option of leading participants through several simple exercises at the beginning and end of each session.

- Add 10 minutes for each optional “warm-up” and “cool-down” exercise session; they feature the same set of exercises and the same handout is used for both.
- Handout 4b has all of the instructions needed to lead Session 4 exercises.
- Participants will have a chance to try the same movements twice.
- This repetition, along with the handout, will give participants the skills, self-confidence, and tools to do these exercises on their own at home.
- Most group leaders will find the exercises simple to lead.
- You do not need to be a skilled exercise instructor to lead these exercises, but you may want to try them out ahead of time so you will be comfortable demonstrating them.
- Keep in mind that you do not have to use all of the exercises presented in this session. You may want to tailor the physical activities to meet the needs of each group.



## Exercises



**Neck Rolls**



**Shoulder Rolls**



**Wrist Rotations**



**Ankle Rotations**

- Explain that these exercises can improve your strength, balance, and flexibility.
- Assure participants that most will find these four simple exercises easy to do and many will be familiar with the exercises.
- Emphasize that if they do not feel comfortable or have a physical condition that prevents them from doing any or all of the exercises, it is OKAY to sit them out; if they feel pain, discomfort, or fatigue while exercising, they should not hesitate to stop or take a break; and, if they need assistance, they should let you know right away.
- Pass out Handout 4b, *Session 4 Exercises*, and ask participants to take a look at it.
- List the four exercises on the handout:
  - Neck Rolls
  - Shoulder Rolls
  - Wrist Rotations
  - Ankle Rotations
- Lead Session 4 Exercises 1-4, using Handout 4b and directing participants to look at the pictures.
- Demonstrate the exercises, making sure participants can see you, giving a few, simple verbal instructions. Have participants follow along as you repeat each exercise.
- Check whether the group is doing each exercise correctly and help those who appear to need additional instruction.
- Be sure to encourage and give positive feedback to participants as they try the exercises.

### Tip! Accommodating Participants' Physical Limitations

Some of the older adults in your group may have physical limitations, such as being confined to a wheel chair. You can adapt the exercises for these participants by having them do the exercises seated, while others in the group can do the same exercises standing up.



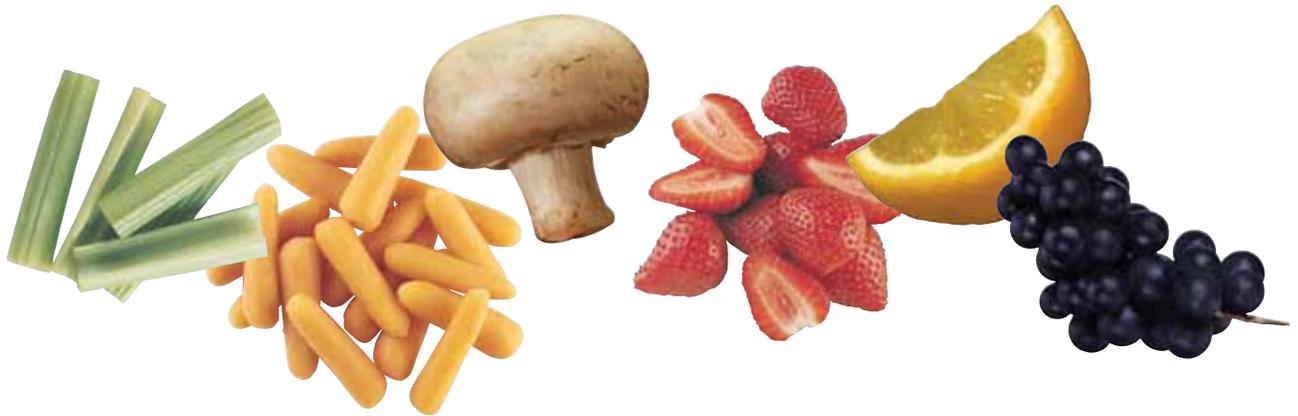
## Eat Smart, Spend Less

### 1 Welcome and Introductions



- **Introduce the session.** Let participants know that this is the last of four sessions in the *Eat Smart, Live Strong* series and that today's session is "**Eat Smart, Spend Less.**"
- **Acknowledge familiar faces.** Give a big hello to those who attended earlier sessions and assure newcomers that they will find it easy to join in even though this is their first session.
- **Introduce yourself.** Mention the current price of one fruit or vegetable item at a local market. Ask participants to introduce themselves by stating their names and by naming a fruit or vegetable item (fresh, frozen, canned, or dried) and its current, local price to the best of their knowledge. Write the participants' names in two columns and save the list for the session skills-building activity.





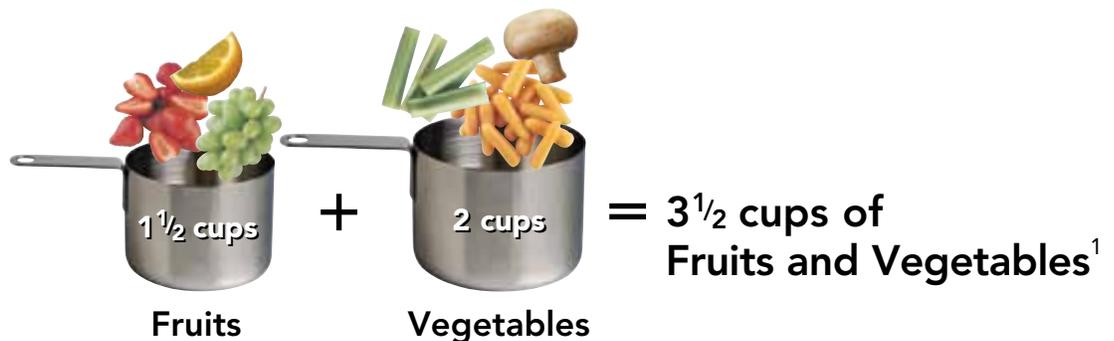
- **Set a warm and relaxed tone.** Let participants know that you hope to learn from their experiences and that they may offer comments or ask questions at any time.
- **State the purpose of today's session.** Participants will identify ways they can eat at least  $3\frac{1}{2}$  cups of fruits and vegetables every day while staying within their food budgets.
- **Share the length of the session.** Let people know that the session will take about an hour. Mention other helpful information such as the location of the rest rooms, water fountains, or exit areas.



## 2 Two Important Behaviors and Their Benefits



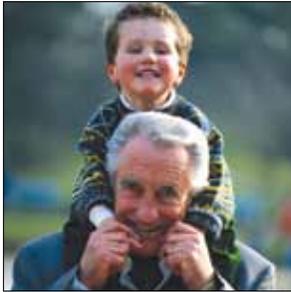
- Explain that the **Eat Smart, Live Strong** program focuses on two important behaviors. These are two actions that health experts recommend to improve the health and well-being of people of all ages:
  - 1 Eat at least 3½ cups of fruits and vegetables every day
  - 2 Participate in at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity most days
- Mention that the amount of fruits and vegetables for any person depends on activity level, age, and gender. Point out that older adults should eat at least 3½ cups each day. One and a half cups should be fruit. Two cups should be vegetables.



- Ask participants to name some of the benefits of eating 3½ cups of fruits and vegetables every day. Make sure the following are mentioned:
  - Get some of the vitamins, minerals, and fiber needed to maintain good health
  - Maintain regularity
  - Help prevent or delay the effects of chronic diseases such as obesity, hypertension, and heart disease
  - Add color, taste, and variety to their diets



<sup>1</sup> Based on the segment of the target audience with the lowest caloric need – sedentary women (1,600 calories per day). For older adults who are more active, recommend 2 cups of fruits and 2½ cups of vegetables (2,000 calories per day).



- Ask participants to list some of the ways they can be physically active. Be sure to include:

- Walking briskly
- Mowing the lawn
- Aerobics
- Weight lifting
- Jogging
- Dancing
- Swimming
- Stationary cycling
- Active walking or running with grandchildren



- Discuss the benefits of engaging in 30 minutes of physical activity most days. Mention the following:
  - Help prevent or delay the effects of chronic disease
  - Decrease mild stress, anxiety, and depression
  - Build and maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints
  - Improve strength
  - Increase balance and reduce the risk of falling
  - Improve sleep

## 3 Measuring Your Goals



- Those who participated in Session 1 or 2 set goals for themselves for both behaviors. Some may have brought back the *Set Your Goals* handout on which they recorded their daily success.
- Invite participants to share their successes. Ask participants to describe what has made it easier to do each of the two behaviors.
- Have the group congratulate those who have made progress toward their goals.
- Hand out additional copies of Handout 4a, *Set Your Goals*, to those who wish to continue tracking their success.



## 4 Skills-Building Activity



- Tell participants that one of the most frequently mentioned barriers to eating fruits and vegetables is price. Acknowledge that eating fruits and vegetables can be more expensive than eating other foods, but that they will have a chance during this session to look for ways to purchase reasonably priced fruits and vegetables.
- Introduce the game **The Right Price**, designed to identify ways to cut the cost of eating fruits and vegetables. You will show players a food item, tell them where you obtained it, and ask them to guess the price.
- Distribute Handout 4c, *Cost Sheet for Fruits and Vegetables*, and explain to participants that they can record each fruit or vegetable, its price, and where it was obtained as the game is played. They can also use this table to keep track of where they have purchased fruits and vegetables on sale. Provide samples or suggest fruits and vegetables that are typically priced lower throughout the year such as bananas, apples, orange juice, carrots, greens, potatoes, and beans.



### Tip! Everyone's a Winner

Reinforce learning and increase the fun by presenting players with reinforcement tools. When a player correctly guesses the price of a food item, you may offer him or her an item to take home. Alternatively, you may want to give every participant a reinforcement item – such as a grocery list pad – just for playing.





## 4 Skills-Building Activity continued

- Use the price examples to highlight a variety of ways to cut costs:
  - For example, present a fresh fruit or vegetable that is in season and a fresh fruit or vegetable that is out of season. Have participants discuss why buying in season saves money.
  - Similarly, present a brand-name frozen or canned item and a store-brand or generic version of the same item. Review the label with participants to identify which ingredients are the same or different. Comparing the two prices leads to a discussion of how to save money by shopping for generic rather than brand-name products.
  - Compare the per-ounce cost of canned green beans in a small can versus a large can.



### Tip! Available Resources

The discussions about available resources make this game a useful way for older, low-income participants to share their knowledge and experiences. You will want to be up-to-date on the resources that are available locally, so you can ensure the information they offer is accurate. (See Preparation, pages 2-3, for tips on how to be ready.)



- Lead a discussion about nutrition assistance programs. This gives you and participants a chance to talk about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, Commodity Supplemental Food Program, local food pantries, home-delivered meals, and other programs for which the participants may be eligible. Be aware of other local community resources.
- Throughout the game, ask participants to share their knowledge and experiences, since many of them will be resourceful at cutting corners on food budgets.
- Time may not allow for you to provide details on all the programs available. Offer to talk after the session with individuals who want more information about nutrition assistance programs. When possible, make it easy for participants to apply by providing application forms, addresses, phone numbers, or web sites. If appropriate and available, pass out copies of resource lists that describe local programs.



**You need not be an expert on this topic. If participants raise a question you cannot answer or make a statement that you doubt, it's fine to acknowledge that you do not know. Offer to find the facts and get back to the participants. Have names and phone numbers handy to refer participants.**

## 4 Skills-Building Activity continued



- Ask participants to estimate how low-cost and free food items might enable them to eat at least 3½ cups of fruit and vegetables every day. Ask them to share their own strategies for saving money on fruits and vegetables – such as raising their own produce (benefits can be used to purchase vegetable seeds) or joining with friends to buy and share bulk purchases.
- Congratulate participants for their success at playing the game and encourage them to continue to share their ideas for buying low-cost fruits and vegetables.



## 5 Wrap-Up

**Session 4 Participant Feedback Sheet**  
for Session 4, Eat Smart, Spend Less

Please take a few moments to complete this form. Return this sheet to the group leader. Your comments will help the leader continue to improve the session.

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How useful was the information you learned from this session? (Mark one response.)  
 Not at all useful  
 Somewhat useful  
 Useful  
 Very useful  
 Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Are you planning to eat more fruits and vegetables next week? (Mark one response.)  
 Yes  
 No  
 I am not sure

3. Are you planning to increase your physical activity next week? (Mark one response.)  
 Yes  
 No  
 I am not sure

4. What did you like the most about this session?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

5. What did you like the least about this session?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

6. How did you hear about this Eat Smart, Live Strong session? (Mark all that apply.)  
 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program office  
 Friend  
 Senior center  
 Poster  
 Flyer  
 Newsletter  
 Place of worship  
 Other - specify \_\_\_\_\_

7. In which programs do you participate? (Mark all that apply.)  
 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program  
 Community Supplemental Food Program  
 Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program  
 Home delivered meals  
 Congregate meals  
 Food bank or pantry

Thank you for participating in Eat Smart, Live Strong!

Handout 4d: Eat Smart, Live Strong



- Thank participants for joining this session.
- Recap the main point of this session: participants can find ways to stay within their food budgets while obtaining enough fruits and vegetables to eat at least 3½ cups every day.
- Let participants know that their honest feedback about today's session will help you to improve the session for future groups. Using the *Participant Feedback Sheet* (Handout 4d) and/or through discussion, ask some of these questions:
  - What new thing did you learn?
  - Which part of the session was most important to you?
  - Do you think today's session will help you eat at least 3½ cups of fruits and vegetables every day?
  - Will this session help you participate in at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week?
  - How could we make the session better?
  - How did you hear about today's session? – or – about the *Eat Smart, Live Strong* program?
- If you are using the written *Participant Feedback Sheets*, assure participants that this is not a test – and that there are no wrong answers! Encourage honest opinions. Help people who have difficulty writing. Collect the feedback sheets. You will find it useful to review participants' responses. Tabulating their answers can help you find ways to improve the session before your next group. The feedback also may serve as a report on your educational activities.

## Optional Physical Activity Cool-Down

Following the 30-minute session, add 10 minutes to lead the same set of exercises with which you opened this session. If you opted not to do the “Warm-Up,” refer to pages 4-5 for more explanation.

- Announce that the last activity in today’s session will be 10 minutes of “cool-down” exercises.
- Emphasize that if they do not feel comfortable or have a physical condition that prevents them from doing any or all of the exercises, it is OKAY to sit them out; if they feel pain, discomfort, or fatigue while exercising, they should not hesitate to stop or take a break; and, if they need assistance, they should let you know right away.
- Ask participants to look at Handout 4b before they begin. Remind them that they will take the handout home and could try these exercises most days of the week.
- If you have noticed some participants who are comfortable with the exercises, you might invite a participant to lead the group in one of the exercises; or ask the participant to help others who may be having difficulty.
- Thank the group again for their participation. Express the hope that they see adding a little physical activity to their day can be fun and easy. Suggest that they do these simple exercises with a friend or family member.



# *Eat Smart, Live Strong* Activity Kit

The *Eat Smart, Live Strong* Activity Kit offers a set of learning experiences to facilitate older adults' adoption of two important behaviors that can improve almost everyone's health and quality of life:

- 1 Eat at least 3½ cups of fruits and vegetables every day
- 2 Participate in at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days

Because knowledge is not enough for people to adopt healthful habits, the kit takes a behavioral approach that builds on applied behavioral theory and prior research. The sessions and materials have been tested with staff and group leaders in nutrition sites. Handouts were also tested with potential participants – low-income adults between 60 and 74 years old who are eligible for USDA Food and Nutrition Service's programs.



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