



The Battle of the Carbohydrates

Background Information (optional):

- [Choose MyPlate](#)
- [Whole Grains- Harvard](#)
- [American Heart Association: Carbohydrates](#)
- [American Diabetes Association - Types of Carbohydrates](#)
- [Hand Method for measuring food](#)

Behavior Goals

1. Understand the difference between refined and whole grains.
2. Be able to voice healthier alternatives to refined carbohydrates.
3. Understand that physical activity is one of the most important actions that people can take to improve their health.
4. Be able to find ways to incorporate physical activity into their daily lives.

Meeting Preparation:

1. Review the newsletter. Send questions or concerns to your coordinator.
2. Review the background resources (website links are provided above).
3. Choose one of the recipe options. Make the recipe at least once before the meeting. Write down helpful hints for the group. If virtual, have ideas on what to share about the recipe you tried.
4. Determine how to transport and taste featured food tasting.
5. If the meeting is virtual, prepare ideas for how to engage participants in the recipe making process.
 - a. Prepare a grocery list for the recipe chosen that can be sent with newsletter for participants to purchase
 - b. Demonstrate recipe on video and direct participants to the recipe in the newsletter.
 - c. If conference call: create a conversation about the recipe: serving size, freezing instructions, tips, discussion on ingredients, nutrition etc.

Continued on page 2

The suggested wording for the presentation is in regular font and the facilitator directions are in ***bold, dark red italic.***

It's best not to read the presentation, but to use your own words, staying close to the meaning.

Props:

1. Optional: Oat cereal, Brown Rice, Bagel, Pasta, Popcorn
2. Measuring Utensils ($\frac{1}{3}$ cup, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup, 1 cup)
3. 15 Clear Bowls
4. Empty MyPlate Template for each participant

Conversation

Welcome to Fresh Conversations today! We are so glad you joined us! This will be the last in our series on processed foods. Was there anything different you noticed during grocery shopping? Have you paid closer attention to any products or any new health claims you've noticed?

Allow time for participants to discuss.

In the last issues, we discussed different food claims such as low fat or fat free. We also discussed different words used on bread products such as white, wheat, multigrain, whole grain.

Allow time to share.

Introduction

As the last newsletter in a series of three on processed foods, we are going to wrap everything up by discussing a larger topic, carbohydrates. We will discuss the importance of quality carbohydrates and how to incorporate them into a healthy diet.

Nutrition Discussion

Let's play a game to test your knowledge of serving sizes to start. Use 1, 2, or 3 fingers to guess the answer.

You could physically show them the serving sizes to give them a visual of the serving sizes. You could have three clear bowls for each example and pour each as you go. Another option could be to have them ready and show each as you go through each example. Facilitators could also show the hand method to help participants estimate (see link at the top of page 1).

What is considered 1 serving?

Oat Cereal: **1) $\frac{1}{2}$ cup** 2) 1 cup 3) 2 cups

Cooked Brown Rice: **1) $\frac{1}{2}$ cup** 2) $\frac{2}{3}$ cup 3) 1 cup

Bagel: 1) $\frac{1}{2}$ bagel 2) 1 bagel **3) $\frac{1}{3}$ bagel**

Pasta, cooked: 1) 1 cup 2) 2 cups **3) $\frac{1}{2}$ cup**

Popcorn, popped: 1) 1 cup **2) 3 cups** 3) 5 cups

Source: [MyPlate](#)

Carbohydrates are an essential part of your diet but you are often told they are harmful to your health. This gets to be really confusing trying to figure out what is best for your own health. What are some foods that you have heard you should avoid?

For just a few minutes, allow the group to reflect on some nutrition claims they have heard in the news or read in a magazine or newspaper.

Eating a diet with little to no carbohydrates is just not feasible. But the quality of carbohydrates plays a bigger role in your health than the quantity. When you hear the word quality, what comes to your mind?

Give the group a minute to talk about the word quality. It doesn't necessarily have to be about food or carbohydrates but just in general, what that word means to them.

When quality is discussed with grains, the gold standard is "whole grain." In the last newsletter we talked about this in great detail, that the more processing a food undergoes, typically the more harmful effects it will have on your body in excess amounts. But let's talk about what benefits whole grains can have on your body and why the quality of the grain has a positive effect. Refer to page 2 of the newsletter for a discussion on fiber.

Allow time to review fiber recommendations. Do they think they get enough fiber in their diets? What questions come to mind regarding how to find out if a product is whole grain or not?

Pop Trivia - Let's keep your brain moving!

1. Which of these foods is a whole grain?
 - a. **Popcorn**, White Rice, Wheat Bread
2. What is the only grain native to North America?
 - a. **Wild Rice**, Rye, Couscous

*It originated in the area of the upper Great Lakes in what is now both the U.S. and Canada.

Challenge

Create one meal (breakfast, lunch or dinner) that incorporates a whole grain into each meal. Use the MyPlate template - goal to have at least three food groups in the meal. Write it down on a piece of paper or a paper plate.

Facilitators could provide empty "MyPlate" templates for the participants to build meals. Another option could be a paper plate and divide into 4.

This could also be a group exercise to ask for volunteers to build a meal. I.e. Facilitators ask for a volunteer to list a food example for grains group, another volunteer to list a food example for protein groups, and so on with fruits, vegetables, and dairy groups.

Physical Activity:

Let's talk about physical activity. Being physically active is one of the most important actions that people of all ages can take to improve their health.

The article talks about the The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. These guidelines are an evidence-based guide to help Americans improve or maintain their health through physical activity. The guidelines were developed by the United States Department of Health and Human Services and complement the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

The main idea behind the Guidelines is that regular physical activity over months and years can produce long-term health benefits.

Can you think of any benefits you feel when you're physically active?

Allow time for discussion. Possible examples: good muscle strength, good endurance and stamina, better sleep, less injuries, more energy and less fatigue, less pain, less anxiety and depression, less constipation.

Let's walk through the physical activity recommendations.

- Adults should move more and sit less throughout the day.

Q. What do you think is meant by this recommendation? Allow time for discussion.

This means that some physical activity is better than no physical activity and any physical activity is great for your health.

- Adults should do at least 150 minutes of aerobic activity a week. Aerobic activity is brisk walking, aerobics or group fitness, pickleball, raking the yard.

Q. How much time is 150 minutes a week? Allow time to answer.

2 hours and 30 minutes, 21 minutes per day, 30 minutes 5 days a week, etc.

- Adults should also do muscle-strengthening activities that involve all major muscle groups on 2 or more days a week.

Q. What major muscle groups might this include? Allow time for discussion.

- This includes the legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms.

The notable differences between the new and old guidelines was the focus on the idea that any movement counts. Any amount of physical activity is good and contributes to your overall health.

Let's go around as a group and share what physical activity (movement) we enjoy doing now, and what movement you would like to add into your days this month. I will go first.

It would be helpful to have an example prepared to share with the group about what physical activity you do and what movement you would like to add into your days this month.

How will you add movement to your day?

Allow group discussion time.



Tasting Activities:

1. Stuffed Pasta Shells (preferred):

- <https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/recipe/easy-stuffed-pasta-shells/>
- If looking for lower calories, use a fat free or 1% cottage cheese.
- Look for whole grain pasta shells for increased fiber.
- Spaghetti or pasta sauce can be a culprit for added sugars. Look at nutrition facts label with a goal of 6 g added sugars or less per serving.
- Frozen spinach is an excellent source of Vitamin K, A, C, and folate. 1 cup of spinach has 4 g fiber.
- This can be made into a casserole if you can't find whole wheat large shells. Do steps 1-4 as is but use 12-16oz or about 4 cups whole wheat shells, rotini or penne. For step 5, mix cheese mixture and cooked whole wheat pasta together. Arrange over layer of sauce. Pour remaining sauce over top. Complete steps 6 and 7 as is.

2. Pasta Salad

- <https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/recipe/pasta-salad/>
- Use whole wheat pasta
- Tell participants you could use fresh or frozen vegetables for this recipe.
- Could make different "themes." Use tomato, canned corn, black beans, peppers and red onion for a Mexican inspired dish. Or use tomato, feta, cucumber and red onion for a Mediterranean inspired dish.

Take Action

As we leave our meeting, I would like you to think about our series on processed foods and how those foods can fit into your diet. Has anything changed with your grocery shopping? Can you think of any refined grains that you plan to switch to whole grain? If you are comfortable, tell us what changes you want to make.

Provide an example: I am going to focus on increasing my fiber intake. Next week, I plan to switch my sandwich bread to whole grain instead of white.