



Seniors Eating Well: a Sourcebook of Lesson Plans and Activities

By Lynn James, MS, RDN, LDN and Dori Campbell, MS, RDN, LDN

Abstract

Objective- To increase the nutrition knowledge and improve the health behaviors of older adults, specifically reducing sodium, increasing healthy fats, snacks, fruits, vegetables and whole grains, reading nutrition labels, and physical activity. The target audience is middle-older and older adults. Theory, prior research, and the rationale is based on U.S. census data, 2015- 2020 U.S. Dietary Guidelines, and Social Cognitive Theory. **Seniors Eating Well** is a nine lesson curriculum that was completely updated in 2016 to incorporate the new U.S. Dietary Guidelines. It is appropriate for SNAP-ed and other older adult audiences at senior centers, community centers, and senior housing centers and with middle-older adults (aged 50-65) at work sites, clubs, churches, or other organizations. Nine lessons were developed covering nutrition, meal and snack planning, food preparation and physical activity. Evaluations include short retrospective surveys after each lesson and a three-six month follow-up. Student t-tests have shown significant changes in a previous edition.



Statement of Objective

To increase the nutrition knowledge and improve the health behaviors of older adults, specifically reducing sodium, increasing healthy fats, healthy snacks, fruits, vegetables and whole grains, reading nutrition labels, and physical activity.

Use of Theory, Prior Research

The program was developed based on Social Cognitive theory, the U.S. Dietary Guidelines, U.S. Physical Activity guidelines for seniors, and further research on senior nutrition and physical activity.

Target Audience

These lessons were designed to reach older adults at places they congregate: senior centers, community centers, and senior housing centers. They can also be used with middle-older adults (aged 50-65) at work sites, clubs, churches, or other organizations. Most are designed to be presented by para-professionals, with **SNAP-ed**. They can also be used by family consumer science and nutrition educators as “pick up and go” lesson plans. Nurses, and staff from aging services, or volunteers can be trained to use these lessons.

Materials developed:

9 PowerPoints with 45 minute lesson plans:

Meal Planning and Decision Making Programs:

- Lesson 1 – Great Grain Discoveries
- Lesson 2 – All Star Senior Snacks
- Lesson 3 – Heart Healthy Meals



Food Preparation Programs:

- Lesson 4 – Cooking and Seasoning with Herbs
- Lesson 5 – Savory Soups
- Additional Handout - Double Strength Calcium Recipes

Social Relationships and Fitness Program:

- Lesson 6 – Fitness Fun

Diet, Health and Chronic Disease Prevention Programs:

- Lesson 7 – Evaluating Dietary Supplements for Seniors
- Lesson 8 – Dietary Fat—Fact or Fiction?
- Lesson 9 – New Concepts in Weight Control—Energy Density

Appendix: Educational Planning Matrix: U.S. 2015-20 Dietary Guidelines, Lesson Objectives

Materials developed continued:

15 recipes, 5 games and activities, 24 handouts, marketing and evaluation tools. The lessons have also been updated in 2006, 2011, and 2016 following the U.S. Dietary Guidelines, and recently adapted for an online course.

Description of Evaluation

Post-program and 3-6 month follow-up evaluations were developed to measure gains in knowledge (five point scale) and changes in behavior.

Results

Previous versions of this curriculum were evaluated and showed positive impact by increasing knowledge, skills/abilities, intent to change behaviors, and behavior change. The program has also been used by many others states’ Extension services and outside Extension by older adult community programmers.



This publication is available in alternative media on request.
Where trade names appear, no discrimination is intended, and no endorsement by Penn State Extension is implied.
Penn State is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, and is committed to providing employment opportunities to minorities, women, veterans, individuals with disabilities, and other protected groups. Nondiscrimination: <http://guru.psu.edu/policies/AD85.html>