

Healthy Weighs for Less

Healthy Eating and Food Resource
Management Mini Lessons
for Food Pantry Audiences



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Questions and comments about this curriculum should be directed to: Emily Latham, Nutrition Education



Introduction

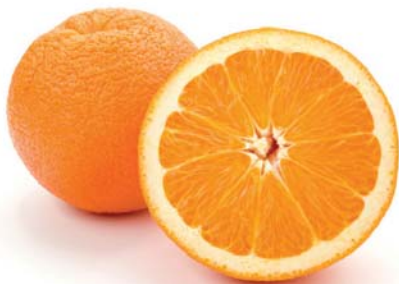
Food pantry clients struggle with more than the issue of food insecurity, or lack of assured access to sufficient foods to support a healthy and active life. Research tells us that low-income adults experience higher rates of certain diseases, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. In addition, 70% of overweight or obese adults in Wisconsin are low-income. Lack of economic resources often results in the selection and consumption of low-cost, less healthy foods. Healthy food choices and physical activity can help support a healthy weight and reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

The Healthy Weighs for Less curriculum is designed to help food pantry clients overcome barriers to healthful eating. This curriculum introduces ways for food pantry clients to (1) eat more fruits and vegetables, (2) replace refined grains with whole grains (3) reduce their intake of sugar-sweetened beverages, and (4) practice food budgeting techniques to improve food security and availability of healthy foods.

Healthy Weighs for Less consists of twelve 15 minute interactive lessons with handouts and healthy recipes that use foods commonly found at food pantries. Food pantries play a critical role in the food security of individuals and families in the community, and nutrition education at food pantries is one way of supporting clients in making healthy choices.

Curriculum overview

The Healthy Weighs for Less curriculum is designed for use with food pantry audiences. It consists of twelve individual mini lessons, 10–15 minutes in length. Lessons are most effective if conducted with 3–15 learners. The curriculum is based on the Social Cognitive Theory which addresses both individual and environmental influences on behavior. Lessons have been adapted from previous University of Wisconsin-Extension FoodWise lessons, lessons developed by county units and peer reviewed, or lessons created specifically for this curriculum.



The behavioral goals of Healthy Weighs for Less are to help food pantry clients:

- Practice food budgeting techniques to improve food security and availability of healthy foods
- Increase intake of fruits and vegetables
- Aim to replace half of refined grains with whole grains
- Reduce consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages

This tool was developed primarily for use by FoodWise educators across Wisconsin. Certain references may be specific to the delivery of SNAP-Ed by FoodWise educators and not relevant to other program administrators.

Lesson structure

Lessons do not need to be taught in any specific order. Lesson plans include intermediate objectives for the learner, content to be shared with participants, amount of time allotted for each activity, specific learning activities, materials needed to conduct activities, assessments, and references for activities and/or handouts.

Following each lesson plan is/are:

- a. Participant handouts
- b. A customizable marketing poster
- c. Goal sheets in English and Spanish
- d. Additional materials needed to facilitate the learning activities

A few lessons also include a printable 3-panel display located in the Appendix. Each panel is 11 x 17 inches. Displays are available in English and Spanish. Lessons should be conducted in their entirety as each piece of the lesson is important to achieve the objectives, and omitting a piece compromises the integrity of the lesson.

Materials

Most materials required to conduct Healthy Weighs for Less lessons should be available in FoodWise offices, or can be easily acquired. The Save Dollars on Drinks lesson requires calculators, which can be standard electronic calculators, client cell phone calculators, or “Where to Find the Money You Need” sliding calculators used by some UW-Extension Family Living agents for financial education. If you are interested in ordering the reusable sliding calculators from Advantage Publications, they are \$1.95 each for a minimum of 50.