

Choose Wisely: For Health and Wealth

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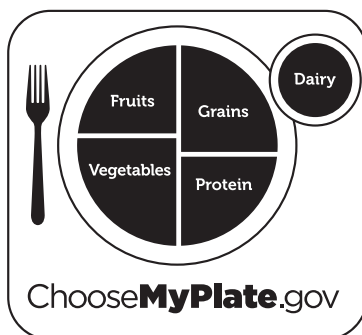
Choices ... Choices ... Choices. Everyone makes choices every day. Some of those choices include deciding what to eat, how much to eat, and whether to include physical activity in the day. The news is full of information — some of it conflicting — about nutrition and health. When all is said and done, do nutrition and health choices really make any difference?

Consider this:

- » Did you know that chronic disease, including obesity, is responsible for more than 70 percent of health care costs in Kansas?
- » Did you know that making healthy lifestyle choices can help protect against chronic diseases?
- » According to the Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease: If Americans were to stop smoking, exercise regularly, and eat well, they could prevent up to 80 percent of heart disease and stroke, 80 percent of type 2 diabetes, and 40 percent of cancers.

Think about those statements. What effect could this have on your health and your healthcare costs?

Research indicates a definite link between food and physical activity habits, and the quality of a person's health. So, yes, the choices you make are very important and can make a significant difference in quality of life. Since health is influenced by the choices you make each day, let's examine tools you can use to make wise choices that can help improve health and potentially save money from reduced healthcare costs.



Lesson Objectives/Outcomes

Participants will:

- » Recognize the link between food and physical activity choices, and the quality of health.
- » Use core principles of ChooseMyPlate.gov and the Nutrition Facts Label as tools to make informed, healthy food choices.
- » Gain awareness of nutrient-dense foods, and improve knowledge of the benefits of choosing nutrient-dense foods most often.
- » Improve knowledge of physical activity recommendations and the benefit of physical activity to health outcomes.

Intended Audiences

- » Adult groups of any age, including community groups, church groups, and Family and Community Education groups (FCE).
- » Youth audiences, 4-H groups, and FCS classes.
- » Anyone in a position to make food choices at grocery stores, restaurants, or other places food is available.

Preparation

- » Review the “Choose Wisely: For Health and Wealth” fact sheet (MF2826), and review this leader's guide for suggested activities. If desired, review the website resources listed in these materials.
- » Secure a copy of the PowerPoint presentation that accompanies this lesson if desired.
- » Gather copies (or make photocopies) of the fact sheet and participant survey for each audience member.
- » Gather items needed for any presentation activity chosen to share with the lesson.
- » Have pens or pencils available.

Presenting the Information/Suggested Activities

1. Give each participant a copy of the “Choose Wisely: For Health and Wealth” fact sheet and teach the concepts outlined.
2. Distribute a variety of Nutrition Facts Labels to the group and discuss how to compare the facts on the food labels of packaged foods to help make wise food choices.
3. Sample ice cream, light ice cream, and frozen yogurt of a particular brand to compare taste. Have participants guess which one is which before disclosing actual facts.
4. Download dietary information of menu items from chain restaurants, and challenge participants to use the information to select foods for a meal that supplies one third of their suggested daily calorie allowance per ChooseMyPlate.gov. Encourage them to consider nutrient-density of foods selected. Or, select a day’s worth of balanced meals if time allows.
5. Prepare half sheets of paper entitled “Choosing Wisely For a Healthier Me” and encourage participants to write down at least one personal goal they plan to achieve as a result of hearing the information presented.

Community Awareness Activities

- » Present this program to already established community groups such as social clubs, service organizations, or church groups.
- » Sponsor a booth or display at a local county fair, health fair, Walk Kansas activity, or other upcoming community event.

Helpful Websites

<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/ten-tips-build-healthy-meal>

<https://www.fda.gov/Food/LabelingNutrition/ucm274593.htm>
(How to Understand the Nutrition Facts Label)

<https://www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/LabelingNutrition/UCM537178.pdf>

<https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/>

<https://www.nutrition.gov/>

Most chain restaurants have websites that include dietary information. Do a search to find restaurants in your area.

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