



Eat Wisely to Tip the Balance

Session Overview

This session focuses on how to eat wisely to decrease calories and how to determine what is in the foods we eat.

OBJECTIVES FOR SESSION

1. Participate in group exploration about how to tip the balance between calories in and out
2. Discuss and understand how all foods can fit into a healthy weight management plan
3. Understand how to read a food label
4. Be able to create a Healthy Plate

SESSION PREPARATION

- Have the following materials available to share with participants:
 - S01 The Basics of Weight Control
 - N10 How to Read a Nutrition Facts Label
 - S06 Making Healthy Choices With A Healthy Plate
 - An assortment of sample food labels and food models
- The following materials may also be helpful for facilitator review when planning the session or for participants to review independently, after session:
 - N01 All Foods Can Fit
 - N21 Serving Sizes
 - Rate Your Plate worksheet
 - Healthy Plate Placemat (provide to attendees if stock available)
- Prepare yourself to encourage interaction and participation from the group, so the balance of talking rests with participants instead of the leader.
- Your role is to facilitate discussion without lecturing.

Session Outline *(60-minute class)*

- Check in (5 minutes)
- Discussion Topics (40 minutes)
- Stretch Activity (2 minutes)
- Putting It All Together (10 minutes)

CHECK-IN *(5 minutes)*

- Facilitate weigh-ins; enter weight into the CPRS Vital Signs package.
- Collect Daily Food and Physical Activity Diaries. Affirm all who completed, reassure those who didn't that they can do it this week – group can help them problem solve if they wish.

DISCUSSION TOPICS *(40 minutes)*

Introduction

- Welcome everyone to the session, and note how their continued attendance bodes well, since folks who attend more sessions lose more weight.
- Briefly point to Ground Rules or Guidelines as a reminder.
- Describe the purpose of today's class. State today's objectives and discussion topics.
- Invite participants to discuss their homework, Daily Food and Physical Activity Diaries, progress, and goals since the last class.
- Facilitate problem-solving for any barriers.
- Focus most of your attention on **successes**.

Discussion #1: What are the basics of weight loss?

- Ask participants the question: "What do people need to do to lose weight?" Record feedback on the board. Distribute MOVE! handout [S01 The Basics of Weight Control](#) and discuss the following:

To lose weight, you need to:

- Eat and drink fewer calories.
- Be more physically active.
- For best results, do both.
- Ask participants to discuss why this seemingly simple solution to losing weight is so difficult for so many of us.

Discussion #2: How do I eat wisely and still enjoy my food?

- Facilitate a conversation about how participants can choose healthier foods that they will still enjoy. You could ask, “What do you do now to choose foods you enjoy that are also healthy?” or, “What might you do differently to make all foods fit and keep it healthy?” (Can reference handout [N01 All Foods Can Fit](#) for review later.)

Stretch Activity (2 minutes)

Incorporating physical activity into the session reinforces the healthy lifestyle message and provides an opportunity to demonstrate some simple but effective exercises.

Ask participants to join you, if they wish, in doing the following stretch activity:

Invite participants to stand up if they are able. If not, they may remain seated.

Simple Stretch:

Extend your arms overhead with elbows straight. Lower arms to sides and reach away from your body. Reach arms behind you and extend away from your body within your comfort zone.

Discussion #3: How can I be a food detective?

- Pass around sample food products with nutrition labels on them, giving participants the opportunity to discuss the pros and cons of the products for the purpose of weight loss and healthy eating.
- Ask participants how they plan to use food labels to tip the balance in favor of weight loss. Distribute MOVE! handout [N10 How to Read a Nutrition Facts Label](#).

Discussion #4: How can I create a Healthy Plate?

- Distribute the handout [S06 Making Healthy Food Choices With A Healthy Plate](#) and have a large version of the [rate-your-plate worksheet](#) on a flipchart or whiteboard. You may also choose to have a dinner plate and food models on a table and engage participants to plan and then help you draw or create their next dinner meal on the table or the flipchart. You may refer to additional handouts ([N01 All Foods Can Fit](#) and [N21 Serving Sizes](#)) for additional review later. Invite participants to compare the plate you created together with a past dinner meal and discuss how they are different.
- Ask participants how they would change their own plate.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER (10 minutes)

Session recap:

- Summarize key points discussed during today's session.
- Referring to the earlier discussion on what you need to do to lose weight, ask participants what their thoughts are from today's session on tipping the balance in favor of weight loss. How might they put these ideas into action?
- Remind the group that the best way to lose weight is to create a calorie deficit by eating and drinking fewer calories and being more physically active (or – even better – highlight this when you hear it from one of them!)

Goals and action planning for the next week:

- Ask Veterans to be mindful about portion sizes this next week and to refer to their healthy plate for the correct balance of foods.
- Ask how it might be helpful to use the healthy plate placemat at home or elsewhere.
- Ask Veterans how many food labels they are willing to review this week. (Recommended minimum of 3 food labels if possible.)
- Ask, “What was most helpful today? What could have been better?”

Homework for next week:

- Encourage participants to begin recording weight daily, continue logging in their Daily Food and Physical Activity Diary, and bring it to every session.
- Provide information necessary for attending the next session (date/time/location, etc.).
- Remind participants to bring their MOVE! Handout Booklet and any other needed class materials.

Topic for next week:

Be Active to Tip the Balance