

Instructor's Manual

Nutrition Education for Limited-Resource Caregivers



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Module: Understanding Food Labels

Time: The module takes approximately one hour to complete. Following are the estimated times for the major segments of the instruction:

- Introduction and purpose (5 min.)
- Module pre-test (5-10 min.)
- Calorie, serving, and percent daily value presentation (5 min.)
- Video: "Servings" (3 min.)
- Serving size and calorie activity (10 min.)
- Important nutrients, nutrients to limit, 5-20 rule presentation (5 min.)
- Video: "The 5-20 Rule Part 1" (2 min.)
- Video: "The 5-20 Rule Part 2" (5 min.)
- Food label analysis and 5-20 rule activity (10 min.)
- Conclusion, module post-test, and parting gift (10 min.)

Summary: The purpose of this module is to help learners understand how to properly read and understand food nutrition labels, and how to use this information to make more informed food purchases.

Materials: Laptop computer
Projector
Understanding Food Labels student handout
Understanding Food Labels pre-test
Understanding Food Labels post-test
Food packages container 1
Food packages container 2
Plastic bowls
Video: Servings
Video: The 5-20 Rule Part 1
Video: The 5-20 Rule Part 2
Parting gifts

Objectives: Learners will be able to:

- Name the three most important elements of the food label.
- Explain the importance of limiting the nutrients listed highest on the food label.
- Explain the 5-20 rule.

- Analyze three food labels using the 5-20 rule.
- Compare serving sizes on food labels to how much they actually eat.
- Discuss three ways to use percent daily values when making healthier food choices.
- Calculate actual calories and calories from fat using the daily percentage and serving size information from two food labels.

Procedures: Begin the PowerPoint presentation. Briefly explain the purpose of the instructional module to the students, particularly why it is important to know how to read and understand food labels.

Explain to the students that you would like for them to take a short pre-test to measure their current food label knowledge. Explain that this isn't graded, but is simply used to gauge the level of knowledge of the subject matter that the average student has prior to the lesson. Distribute the pre-tests, and allow the students 5-10 minutes to complete the tests. Collect the tests when all students are finished.

Continue with the PowerPoint presentation. Discuss the three most important elements of the food label (calories, servings, and percent daily values). Discuss the most important points about each of these three elements, and familiarize students with where information is found on the food label. Then, show the students the "Servings" video.

Lead the students through the serving sizes and calories activity. Distribute the food packages from food packages container 1 evenly among the students' tables. Place the pre-measured amounts of the various foods from food packages container 2 into the plastic bowls. Ask students to guess how many servings are in the various bowls. Surprise them with the actual servings in each bowl. Engage students in a dialog about how the measured amounts compare to the amount they might actually eat. After they know the actual serving amounts, have them consult the corresponding food labels from the packages and calculate the calories they would consume if they ate their typical serving rather than the suggested serving size on the label.

Continue with the PowerPoint presentation. Discuss the nutrients that

people should be making sure to consume enough of (dietary fiber, vitamins A and C, potassium, calcium, and iron). Also go over the nutrients that people should limit in their daily diet (trans fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, sugars). Explain the 5-20 rule, and how it can be applied to quickly check a nutrition label to determine if it is good source of a desirable nutrient, or if it is too high in an undesirable nutrient. Next, show the videos “The 5-20 Rule: Part One” and “The 5-20 Rule: Part Two.”

Lead the students through the food label analysis and 5-20 rule activity. Ask students to reference the food packages on their tables, and then ask them specific nutrition questions about the items. For example, which item has the most dietary fiber per serving? Which is the lowest fat? According to the 5-20 rule, are any of the items on your table a good source of potassium? Vitamin A? Ask them which of the items on their table is the most nutritious overall, and why. Ask several such questions, while moving about the room and checking the students’ labels and providing feedback.

After the activity, distribute the post-test and give everyone 10 minutes or so to complete the test. While collecting the tests, thank everyone for their participation and distribute their parting gifts. These will usually be coupons, recipes, promotional copies of cookbooks, or small kitchen items.

