Reading Labels for Every Body
Unit Facilitator’s Guide

Length of Lesson: 45 minutes

Unit Objectives
As a result of this lesson, individuals will:
• Increase the use of the “Nutrition Facts” on food labels to make food choices.
• Participate in at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity every day.

Evaluation
Healthy Choices for Every Body involves teaching numerous lessons over a period of time. Participants should be evaluated using the Kentucky Nutrition Education Program Reporting System (WebNEERS) Data Entry Forms before the first lesson, after the seven required lessons are completed, and upon graduation from the program. Entry/exit forms used to collect data include Client Enrollment Form, Client’s 24-Hour Diet Recall, Behavior Checklist and Kentucky Specific Additional Questions.
Planning Checklists

Materials List
☐ Presentation Materials:
  • Reading Labels for Every Body (available in English and Spanish) for flipchart or projector/laptop set-up
☐ Icebreaker supplies (will vary depending on activity selected)
☐ Food Demonstration food, supplies and materials (will vary depending on recipe selected)
☐ Activity supplies:
  • Empty food containers and/or food packages (Have enough for each person to have one.)
☐ Handouts/Publications (available in English and Spanish):
  • NEP 209: Reading Labels for Every Body: What’s On a Label?
  • NEP 209A: Reading Labels for Every Body: What Does It All Mean?
  • NEP 209B: Reading Labels for Every Body: Just the Facts
  • Selected food demonstration recipe

Prior to Lesson
☐ Check the “24-Hour Food Recall Record” and the nutrition analysis.
  • Does the participant’s diet indicate certain food groups or key nutrients that need emphasis?
  • Are there overweight or underweight family members?
  • Do the family members exhibit signs of good health?
  • Ask if the participant or any of their children are enrolled in the Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC). If yes, find out which health risk factors qualified each participant for the program.
☐ Check the participant’s progress records to note any questions or confusing concepts from the previous lesson that should be reviewed.
☐ Review the NEP publication for the lesson. Refer to the curriculum guide for additional background reading to develop additional understanding of the topic.
☐ Select an icebreaker activity from the curriculum guide and gather supplies and materials needed for the activity. For the Reading Labels for Every Body unit the following icebreakers are suggested:
  • Label Detective
  • Pour Some Sugar on Me
  • Nutrition Label Trivia
☐ Select a recipe to demonstrate from the curriculum guide and gather food, supplies and tools needed for the food demonstration. Set up the food demonstration station before beginning the lesson. For the Reading Labels for Every Body unit, the following recipes are suggested:
  • Enchilada Rice
  • Tailgater Caviar (pictured at left)
  • Magical Fruit Salad
☐ Copy all printed materials listed above. Remember to also print the recipe for the food dish that is being demonstrated that day.
☐ Gather teaching activity supplies listed above.
☐ Arrive at the facility early and set up the meeting space. No special meeting facilities are needed to conduct this lesson; however, a work table will be needed to present the food demonstration.
Lesson Introduction & Icebreaker
Welcome everyone to the class. Introduce yourself and explain your position with the Nutrition Education Program.

If you have presented before, review the previous lesson and ask if there are questions. Ask if anyone tried anything new as a result of the last class.

Explain that reading food labels will be the topic for the day. Tell participants that the class will focus on:

- Increased use of “Nutrition Facts” on the food labels to make food choices.
- Discussing how participants can add 30 minutes of moderate physical activity every day.

Introduce the icebreaker activity and give directions to the group. Conduct the icebreaker, then transition to the lesson.

Major Points & Learning Activities
NOTE: Use a flip chart or the PowerPoint® presentation as a visual aid during teaching to explain these major concepts related to the lesson objectives:

**Explain how and why to use the “Nutrition Facts” on food labels to make food choices.**

The food label is an important tool for comparing different brands of the same product and evaluating nutrition content. The label can help you pick the best buy. By law, a food container must include the product name, the Nutrition Facts, an ingredient list, health claims, handling instructions, the manufacturer’s name and address and the product’s weight.

People look at food labels for different reasons. Some need to limit the amount of certain nutrients that they consume and some need to consume larger amounts of certain nutrients. Whatever the reason, Serving Size and Servings per Container should be the first thing you read on the Nutrition Facts. The information on the label is for one serving of the food.

Daily Values (DV) are recommended amounts of various nutrients to include in diets every day. Use the % Daily Value to decide if the food provides a small, medium or high percentage of your day’s total needs. A Daily Value of 5 percent or less means the food is low in that nutrient, 20 percent or more DV indicates high amounts.

To learn the nutrient content of a food, look at the Nutrition Facts. These include very basic information based on a single serving. The serving size is the first item listed. The number of servings per container will help you determine how many containers to buy. Serving size is based on the amount most people actually eat.

Next on the Nutrition Facts are calories for one serving and calories from fat. This information allows you to quickly figure out if the product is high, medium or low in fat. The next five nutrients listed help determine if this product fits a personal diet. These are the nutrients that most Americans eat too much of, so you should limit dietary intake of total fat, saturated fat, trans-fat, cholesterol and sodium. Eating too much of these nutrients may increase risk of certain chronic diseases, such as heart disease, high blood pressure or some cancers.

Also listed on the Nutrition Facts label are dietary fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium and iron. Most Americans do not get enough of these nutrients in their diets. These nutrients can improve health and help reduce the risk of some diseases and conditions. Values for these nutrients are expressed in both weight and as a percentage of the daily value (DV), based on a 2,000-calorie diet. It is important to remember that personal calorie needs may be greater or less than 2,000 calories.
Remember, the Nutrition Facts label can be used not only to help limit and cut back on those nutrients, but also to consume nutrients in greater amounts when appropriate.

**ACTIVITY:** Give the participant an empty food container (they can also work in pairs). Explain that the goal is to become more familiar with the components of the food label. During the activity generate discussion about surprising findings and answer any questions. First, ask participants if they can find the ingredient list, the net weight, handling instructions, Nutrition Facts and any health claims. Next, ask participants to identify the size of a single serving, the number of servings in the container, the calories in a serving and the calories from fat. Finally, ask participants to determine if the product is high, low or medium in fat, cholesterol, sodium, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium and iron. The following list should aid in discussing specific nutrients and in identifying products that contain the nutrients being discussed.

**CALORIES:** Fat contains more calories per gram than carbohydrates or protein, so foods high in fat are likely to be high in calories. Examples include butter, margarine, cream, pastries, nuts, oil-based dressings, sausages and luncheon meats.

**SATURATED FAT:** Foods high in saturated fat include fatty meats such as sausages, luncheon meats and prime cuts of meat; dairy products with high fat content such as cream, cream cheese and butter; and foods with fat that is solid at room temperature.

**TRANS-FAT:** Foods high in trans-fats include foods made with hydrogenated the vegetable oils that are found in shortening and margarine, such as biscuits, pie crusts and other pastries; and foods fried in shortenings, such as doughnuts or fried chicken.

**TOTAL FAT:** Includes sources of saturated fat, trans-fat, and unsaturated fat. Sources of unsaturated fat include vegetable oils such as corn oil, sunflower oil, soybean oil, safflower oil and olive oil.

**CHOLESTEROL:** Cholesterol is found in animal products such as meat, poultry, egg yolks, dairy products and items made with animal fat such as pastries made with lard.

**SODIUM:** Sodium is found in many condiments such as ketchup, relishes, soy sauce, barbecue sauce or dressings. Also high in sodium are cured and pickled foods such as ham, sausages, bacon, hotdogs, dried beef, sauerkraut, and pickles. Prepared foods such as canned soups or soup mixes gravy mixes, and most commercial seasoning mixes are high in sodium. Other sources of sodium include soft drinks and medications.

**CARBOHYDRATES:** Grains, fruits, vegetables and dairy products all contain carbohydrates.

**DIETARY FIBER:** The best sources of dietary fiber are whole grains, bran, fruits and vegetables with seeds, skins, pulpy stems and membranes.

**SUGARS:** Many foods contain naturally occurring sugars, such as lactose in milk or fructose in fruit. Foods highest in sugars usually contain added sugars, such as corn syrup, high fructose corn syrup or sucrose (sugar). Examples of foods that contain added sugars are soft drinks, cookies, candies, breakfast pastries or cakes.

**PROTEIN:** High-quality protein is found in animal products, such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs and dairy products. Soy beans and nuts also provide high-quality protein. Protein is also found in grain products and vegetables.

The ingredient list describes what is in the product. Ingredients are listed in order from most to the least by weight. That means that the first ingredient is in the greatest quantity and the last ingredient is in the smallest amount.

Under the label law, products may state claims about the foods. Examples of such claims are “light,” “low-fat” or “low-sodium.” These claims may only be made if the product meets strict government standards. Claims are divided into three categories: health claims, nutrient claims and function claims.
Health claims describe a relationship between a nutrient and a disease or health-related condition. A food must meet certain nutrient levels to make a health claim. An example of this is “High in calcium. May help prevent osteoporosis.”

A nutrient claim describes the level of a nutrient in the food using terms such as “free,” “high” or “low.” An example is “Low-fat milk.” The nutrient level in one food can be compared to that in another food using terms such as “reduced,” “more” and “light.” “Light” means a product contains 25 percent fewer calories than the regular product. An example of this would be “light wheat bread,” which contains 25 percent fewer calories than regular wheat bread. “Reduced” means a product contains 25 percent less of a nutrient than the regular product.

Function claims refer to the role of a nutrient in the body. An example is “Low-fat diets, rich in fiber, containing grain products, fruits and vegetables, may reduce the risk of some types of cancer.” Note that label claims are based on a standard serving size for the given food.

**FOOD DEMONSTRATION:** Select one of the recommended food demonstration recipes that best meets the needs of the participants. During the presentation, reinforce the main idea of the lesson—the importance of reading food labels to make informed choices about food. Encourage participants to be involved by asking volunteers to cut, measure and mix ingredients.

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TIP:** Remind participants they need 30 minutes of moderate physical activity every day. Share the selected physical activity tip of the day.

**Lesson Review**
At the conclusion of the lesson, ask participants, what are the take-home messages from today’s lesson? Specifically, remind participants that:

- Using the nutrition facts on the food label will help them make healthier food choices for the needs of their family.
- They should include 30 minutes of physical activity every day.

Ask participants if they have questions or if anything should be explained further. Ask participants to talk about what they will try at home based on what they learned during the lesson.

**After the Program**

**Reflection**
- If the concepts and information presented seemed to confuse participants follow up with them and make a note on the participant’s progress report of key concepts to review during the next session.
- Document strengths and weaknesses of the program for future improvements. Use questions from participants to assess your teaching and lessons and work to improving discussions and teaching concepts more clearly.
- Note additional needs, props and other items needed for future lessons.
- Incorporate participant ideas to improve future presentations.