



Educate Community on Healthy Cooking at Home

Faith-based communities could host cooking classes that teach people the importance of home-cooked meals. Cooking at home means that your food is fresher and more nutritious. A great example on how to help and teach families about healthy cooking is a Cooking Matters Workshop series that is offered by the Greater Wichita YMCA. The free Cooking Matters classes help families learn to shop for and cook healthy meals on a budget.

The requirements are very simple and most faith-based community organizations can qualify to host them.

- 1) Provide adequate space to hold the class (*the space must have a sink to wash hands, produce, and dishes*).
- 2) Be located in the Sedgwick County.
- 3) Recruit 10-15 consistent participants for the class (*Ideal participants for the class include low-income parents/guardians and childcare providers for children; please note this class is for adults only*).

Make Every Gathering a Healthy Event: Healthy Meetings and Events Guidelines

The following examples can be used to offer healthy foods and beverages for meetings, conferences, and other events held by your organization.

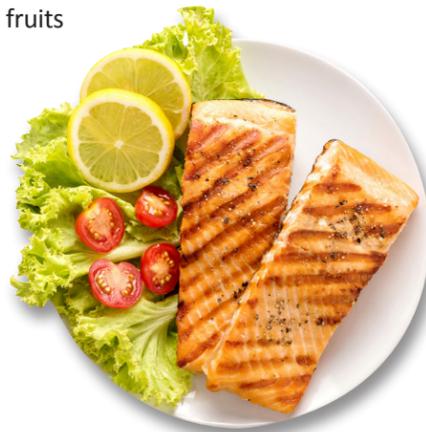
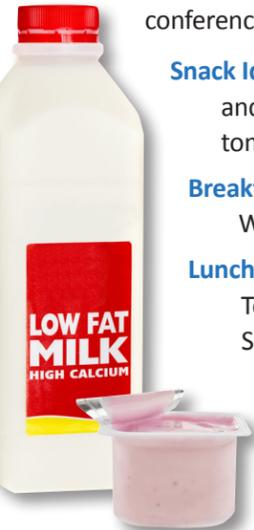
Snack Ideas: Whole fresh fruits like apples, oranges, bananas, and plums. Bite-sized fruits and vegetables; grapes, strawberries, baby carrots, broccoli florets, and cherry tomatoes. Low-fat yogurt with whole grain granola.

Breakfast Ideas: Fruit whole or cut up, fresh, frozen, canned or dried. Whole grain hot or cold cereals and 1% or less milk, hard-boiled eggs.

Lunch Ideas: Sandwiches; whole grain bread such as wraps, pitas, buns. Toppings: shredded lettuce, peppers, tomatoes, low-fat cheeses. Salads with a variety of low sodium/fat dressings.

Hot Meal Ideas: Roasted, broiled, or grilled chicken, turkey, or fish. Steamed vegetables. Whole grain pastas with low sodium/low-fat dressings like tomato or pesto. Low sodium vegetable-based soups.

Beverage Ideas: Water, 100% fruit or vegetable juice, 1% or skim milk, unsweetened tea (regular and herbal; hot and cold).



FEED YOUR ACTIVE FAITH

A Resource Guide for Healthy Eating in Faith-based Communities

APPROXIMATELY 34% OF KANSAS ADULTS aged 18 years and older are obese. In addition, higher rates of obesity are found among adults who are older, African-American, disabled, lack health insurance, or have lower incomes and less education.

As your body mass index rises, so does the risk of coronary heart disease; diabetes; and colon, breast, endometrial, and gallbladder cancers. Sadly, several leading causes of death in Kansas are considered "lifestyle" diseases because simple changes in lifestyle could reduce the risks. The good news is that healthy eating and exercise can change that. The evidence that diabetes is preventable by lifestyle change is overwhelming.

Leaders in faith communities are in an important position to help people prevent chronic diseases. Members of faith-based communities trust them and understand that they support their well being. Leaders know how to reach and inspire a congregation, and they can motivate them to take steps toward healthful living (5).

Why the Faith-based Community?

According to the American Religious Identification Survey, 85% of American adults identify with a religion (2). Religious affiliation and church attendance improve physical and psychological health across multiple religions and people in various parts of the world. In addition, faith-based organizations typically have resources to promote good health, such as buildings with kitchens and meeting rooms. A local faith-based community not only can be a place that promotes spiritual health, but also one that promotes and inspires physical health and wellness.

Steps a Faith-based Community Can Take to Promote Healthy Eating

- Serve more fruits and vegetables after services and during community programs, especially those involving children.
- Adopt a healthy eating policy (*see example on page 3*).
- Increase health and wellness messages through a variety of mediums, such as newsletters, social media sites and emails.
- Host nutrition education classes, such as Cooking Matters (*page 4*).
- Create and maintain a fruit and vegetable mini-market to increase availability of fresh produce to congregation members.
- Provide healthier options at food pantries; request that healthier options be donated to pantries.
- Make changes in the kitchen. These can include training the kitchen committee, changing recipes and menus, stocking the pantry with more fruits and vegetables, and switching from white to wheat flour.
- Start a garden committee to support a church garden.
- Create an edible landscape.
 - Encourage members to share the bounty of their gardens with the faith family.
 - Invite nutrition or health support groups to meet regularly at the faith-based community.
 - Host a farmers market.
 - Implement a physical activity project, most commonly in the form of such social-support programs as a walking club, walking Bible studies and many more (6).



References:

1. Campbell, Elizabeth; Webb, Karen; Ross, Michelle; Crawford, Patricia; Hudson, Heather and Ken Hecht. Nutrition-Focused Food Banking. Institute of Medicine. Copyright 2015 by the National Academy of Sciences. April 2, 2015.
2. Campbell, Marci. Church-Based Health Promotion Interventions: Evidence and Lessons Learned. UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center and the Department of Nutrition, School of Public Health, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.
3. Dover, Sally; Kunkel, Kelly. Promoting Healthy Eating at Food Shelves. Health and Nutrition Programs. University of Minnesota. 2014
4. Pandya, Pratik MPH. Health Risk Behaviors of Kansans 2015. Kansas Department of Health and Environment Bureau of Health Promotion. February 2017
5. Eating Smart and Moving More. Planning and Resource guide. NC Division of Public Health. Revised online publication date: October 2010. Original publication date: June 2004.
6. Physical Activity and Healthy Eating Policy. Retrieved from <http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/PhysicalActivityAndHealthyEatingPolicy/PhysicalActivityAndHealthyEatingPolicy.html>



For additional resources,
contact the Health & Wellness
Coalition or Health ICT



Food Pantries

According to a study from Feeding America, regional food banks and pantries serve around 46.5 million low-income people per year, including 12 million children and 7 million seniors. Many people who are overweight are both undernourished and food insecure, a phenomenon known as the “hunger-obesity paradox” (1) where energy-rich, nutrient-poor diets lead to a higher risk of obesity and chronic disease. It is crucial that organizations supplying low-income families offer foods that do not contribute to obesity and chronic disease.

A few suggested steps for improving current guidelines:

- Ask your food bank if they have healthy options available and then whether you can get a greater quantity more often.
- Draft a policy that addresses selection of foods and solicited donations.
- Put together a brochure or flyer communicating to donors which foods are most appreciated.
- If a faith-based community has limited cold storage and hours of operation, coordinate the timing and amount of your fresh food donations with your distribution so that food does not spoil before clients can take it. (3)



How to Guide Food Pantry Clients to Healthier Options

- Make healthy choices more visible.
- Put a small sign next to healthier foods indicating their nutritional value while also telling people that this may be a better option for them.
- Offer recipes alongside distribution to encourage selection of less common items while providing directions on how to use them.
- Educate your donors.



SUCCESS STORY: MARANTHA COMMUNITY GARDEN

The Maranatha Worship Center in Wichita has a community garden where they have over 20 types of vegetables. They produce food for families in need in our community.



Community Gardens: What Could be a Better Way to Incorporate Healthy Eating and Exercise?

Three faith-based communities in the Wichita area operate successful community gardens: Maranatha Worship Center, Journey church, College Hill United Methodist Church. Starting a garden with your faith-based community is a deeply rewarding and satisfying experience. A vegetable garden is a great way to provide healthy, fresh food for people in your community and to teach children that healthy eating can be fun. Perhaps your congregation has land available for a garden to increase healthy choices at events and in food banks. (4)



SAMPLE HEALTHY FOOD POLICY

Sample policy for use by faith-based organizations regarding healthy food at their events and activities.

Whereas:

_____ (faith-based community organization name here) is concerned about the health of our congregation.

Whereas:

People have become more and more interested in eating smart and moving more;

Whereas:

Chronic diseases – such as heart disease, stroke, cancer and diabetes – are among the most common, costly, and preventable of all health problems in the U.S. and are largely affected by what we eat, how physically active we are and how supportive our communities are in helping us make healthier food and physical activity choices;

Whereas:

Foods such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products, seafood, lean meats, eggs, beans, nuts, and seeds are better choices for preventing many diseases;

Therefore:

Effective _____ (today's date), it is the policy of _____ (organization name here) that all activities and events (examples of events may include: meetings, potluck events, catered events, community sponsored events, like health fair, etc.) sponsored or supported by this organization (where food or beverages are served) will always include opportunities for healthy foods and beverages by:

- ◆ **Offering water as a beverage option and omitting sugar-sweetened beverages** (regular soda, sweet tea, other drinks with sugar).
- ◆ **Offering at least one fruit and/or vegetable option** – Examples of such items include fresh, frozen, canned, or dried fruits (such as baby carrots, oranges, grapes, apples, raisins) and fresh, frozen, or low sodium, canned vegetables.
- ◆ **Offering lower-sodium foods** – Most of the sodium Americans eat is found in processed foods. Eat highly processed foods less often and in smaller portions – especially cheesy foods, such as pizza; cured meats, such as bacon, sausage, hot dogs, and deli/luncheon meats; condiments (ketchup, pickles, olives, salad dressings, and seasoning packets) and ready-to-eat foods, like canned chili, ravioli, and soups. Fresh foods are generally lower in sodium.
- ◆ **Purchasing or serving fat-free/low-fat milk and dairy products** – Examples include skim, nonfat or 1% milk; low-fat and fat-free yogurt; and cheese.
- ◆ **Purchasing foods made from whole grains** – Examples include whole-grain crackers, breads and pastas.
- ◆ **Serving more “right-size” portions** – Smaller servings allow people to cut calories and always have more if they are still hungry.
- ◆ **Purchasing locally grown foods** – Foods grown locally and purchased in-season are often more fresh, tasty and less expensive and helps support your local economy. Buy and serve locally grown foods (and ask caterers and others to do so).
- ◆ **Organizational leadership serve as role models for healthy food choices and encourage healthy food policies.**

Signature _____

Title _____

Name of Organization _____

Date _____