

## Got Fruit? How About Vegetables?

### *You're the Cure—Increase Access to Fruits and Vegetables in Your Community*

#### Lesson Plan

##### Call To Action

Call to Action: You're the Cure—Increase Access to Fruits and Vegetables in Your Community

##### Community Need

Access to quality fruit and vegetables is important for good health. They are high in vitamins, minerals and fiber, and low in “bad” fat and calories. Fruits and vegetables are an important part of a healthy diet—for adults and children. The American Heart Association recommends eating a diet that focuses on healthy food choices such as a variety of fruits and vegetables. Eating a variety can help:

- Lower risk of heart disease and stroke.
- Improve blood pressure.
- Control calories and body weight.



Supermarkets and other larger sized food stores usually stock healthful foods at a lower cost. Many of us take for granted our easy access to these stores. But for millions of Americans who live in food deserts (areas where it is difficult to buy fresh food) getting to the grocery store can be a constant struggle. Across the country, low-income ZIP codes have 25 percent fewer chain supermarkets compared to middle-income ZIP codes. In addition, there are typically fewer chain supermarkets and grocery stores in low-income and minority neighborhoods.

Let's do something about that. Let's be a united community voice advocating for the need for increased access to healthy foods, including fruits and vegetables. Let's talk about the need for better access with family, friends and neighbors.

Let's engage and find solutions for our community.

- What are our personal and community barriers to increasing access to fruits and vegetables?
- What types of things can we do as a community to overcome those barriers?
- What action steps can we commit to make TODAY to move forward?

“Got Fruit? How About Vegetables?” educates your group on steps to take to increase access to fruits and vegetables in your community. It includes three real-life case studies of what similar groups have done. To help inspire action, participants are encouraged to sign up for the American Heart Association's advocacy network “You're the Cure.”

### Three Important Points

Our lives are busy, and many of us are on “information overload.” That’s why we focus on three key health messages:

- Access to quality fruit and vegetables is VITAL for good health, including reducing risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease and obesity.
- Other communities have increased access to fruits and vegetables—we can, too.
- You’re the Cure: Volunteer, advocate and take action.

### EmPowered To Serve Health Check

The EmPowered To Serve Health Check is a way for community members to develop an awareness about their blood pressure and current weight. The goal is to get at least 15 percent of your community organization checking these health measures. And, with it in hand, to complete the My Life Check® personal health assessment using your group’s unique URL.

There are many ways you can conduct this optional EmPowered To Serve health check:

- Before the program, ask participants to check their blood pressure and weight at home, Higi Station (portable health kiosk) or at their doctor’s office.
- Provide a scale and blood pressure machine on site. Ask participants to check their weight and blood pressure before the program gets under way.
- Invite a local healthcare provider or partner with a healthcare organization to check blood pressure and weight for participants at the start of the program.
- If you can host a screening, try to offer blood glucose and cholesterol checks, too.

### Length of Program

- Budget 1 – 1 ½ hours to present the lesson.
- If you are conducting a health screening, add 20 minutes or more before the meeting for participants to get their blood pressure and weight checked.

### Program Materials

**No Access to a Slide Projector? Print out the slides and put them in a three-ring binder. Use the printed slides as a script to deliver your health lesson.**

- Flip chart and markers.
- Download and print out a couple of copies to pass around the group:
  - Voices for Healthy Kids Toolkit for Healthy Corner Stores.
- Handouts (download and make one copy per participant):
  - Get Fresh with Fruits and Vegetables infographic.
- Pens
- Goody bags: Reach out to local businesses such as hospitals, wellness centers, local clinics and other health organizations. Ask them about donating giveaways for participants. Also check out the American Heart Association store ([shop.heart.org](http://shop.heart.org)) for brochures to buy in bulk.

### **Audiovisual Needs**

- Projector for PowerPoint slides.
- Internet connection (optional).

### **Wrap-Up**

Reminder! Once your participants have left, be sure to complete the Ambassador Questionnaire. For details, see your Ambassador Guide page 11.

### **Slide Program with Talking Points and Discussion Questions**

The “Notes” section of the PowerPoint slides includes scripted comments for the lesson. Use this to help walk through the lesson. To engage participants, the talking points also include potential discussion questions. For your reference, below is a list of these questions:

- Do local fast-food restaurants and other local eating places serve quality fruits and vegetables?
- Are you able to buy and prepare as many fruits and vegetables as you would like for your family?
- Where do you usually buy fruits and vegetables?
- Why do you go to that location?
- Is there public transportation to stores that sell quality fruits and vegetables?
- Does limited access to fruits and vegetables make it hard for you and your family to get a variety of fruits and vegetables each day?
- What makes it harder?
- What would make it easier?
- What are our personal and community barriers to eating enough fruits and vegetables?
- What types of things can we do as a community to overcome those barriers?
- What types of things might we do as a community to increase access to fruits and vegetables?
- What action steps can we commit to make TODAY to move forward?