

Kick off your program with a warm welcome and your opening remarks. This could include an inspiring quote or reading or share with the group why this topic is important to you and your reason for offering to host this lesson.

## EATING SMART WITH FRUITS & VEGETABLES | Lesson Overview

### Welcome

- Program Topic

### Health Lesson

- Add more color, crunch and flavor with produce.
- Embrace ways to include a variety of fruits and vegetables in your daily meals.
- Take action to help improve access to fruits and vegetables for everyone.

### Call to Action



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Get everyone focused by reading through the lesson overview.

Let participants know that the lesson takes 30 minutes to complete.

**POINT 1:** Add More Color, Crunch and Flavor with Produce.

**Add color to your diet by eating more fruits and vegetables.**

Eating 2 to 2½ cups (4 to 5 servings) **EACH** of fruits and vegetables every day as part of an overall healthy diet may reduce your risk for cardiovascular disease, including heart attack and stroke.



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Review the information on the slide.

Say: Choosing healthy options is one of the best, easiest and smartest ways for people to take control of their heart and brain health.

Remember that even making small healthy choices today can bring you long-term benefits.

## MORE HEALTH BENEFITS

**Adding more fruits and vegetables to a healthy diet is a powerful step toward a healthier, longer life. It may help you to:**

- Manage weight
- Control blood pressure
- Reduce the risk of some cancers, such as colon cancer
- Reduce the risk of chronic health problems, such as diabetes
- Support healthy digestion



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Review the information on the slide.

Say: Fruits and vegetables are naturally low in saturated fat and calories. They contain vitamins A, C and K, as well as folate, magnesium and potassium. They're a great source of dietary fiber, which has been found to reduce the risk of colon cancer.

## COMMUNITY NEED

**But, *most* of us don't eat enough fruits and vegetables to meet our body's needs:**

- **About 75%** of the U.S. population has an eating pattern that is low in fruits and vegetables.
- **Only 1 in ten** adults meets the recommendations for fruit and vegetable consumption.
- Men and younger adults eat the fewest fruits and vegetables.



Read the slide.

## WHAT IS A SINGLE SERVING OF FRUIT?

The following are examples of a single serving of fruit:



1 medium  
Apple



½ medium  
Avocado



1 small  
Banana



4 large  
Strawberries

**Recommended Daily Amount of Fruit:** 2 to 2½ Cups (4 to 5 Servings)

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Ask participants to reference the handout “What’s A Serving? (Fruits and Vegetables).”

Read the slide.

Ask:

- How many cups of fruits and vegetables do you eat each day?
- Does 2 to 2½ cups of fruits and of vegetables each day seem like a lot to you? Just right?
- Share that you’re going to provide some tips for easy ways to increase fruit and vegetable intake.

## WHAT IS A SINGLE SERVING OF VEGETABLES?

The following are examples of a single serving of vegetables:



5 to 8  
Broccoli florets



Half a large  
Sweet Potato



6 Baby  
Carrots



1 cup of raw  
Spinach

**Recommended Daily Amount of Veggies:** 2 to 2½ Cups (4 to 5 Servings)

Ask participants to reference the handout “What’s A Serving? (Fruits and Vegetables).”

Read the slide.

Ask:

- How many cups of fruits and vegetables do you eat each day?
- Does 2 to 2½ cups of fruits and of vegetables each day seem like a lot to you? Just right?
- Share that you’re going to provide some tips for easy ways to increase fruit and vegetable intake.

## HELPFUL TIPS TO PRODUCE THE BEST RESULT

- Fresh, frozen, canned, and dried all count toward your daily servings
- Make half your plate fruit and vegetables
- Choose whole fruits and vegetables when possible
- Try to eat a variety of vegetables
- Look for fruit that's packed in its own juice and 100% fruit juice with no sugar added
- Look for low-sodium or no-salt-added canned vegetables and 100% vegetable juice with no salt added



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Review the information on the slide.

Say: Remember that whole fruits and vegetables are more filling and give you extra dietary fiber (in both the skin and pulp) that juices don't provide.



**POINT 2: Embrace ways to include a variety of fruits and vegetables in your daily meals and snacks.**

**Dip 'em, Sip 'em, Freeze 'em**

- Chop raw veggies into bite-size pieces and dip them in hummus or low-fat salad dressing.
- Drink fruit-and-veggie smoothies of all colors.
- Freeze 100% fruit juice in an ice cube tray to make mini popsicles.
- Freeze fruit (like grapes or banana slices) for a refreshing treat.



Review the information on the slide.

## EASY ADDITIONS TO EVERY MEAL

Find easy ways to add fruits and vegetables to each meal, such as:



### Breakfast

- Add bananas, raisins or berries to your cereal
- Eat chopped veggies with eggs or potatoes



### Lunch

- Eat a piece of fruit instead of chips
- Add sliced veggies to your sandwich



### Dinner

- Toss chopped fruit with salad greens
- Add cooked green peas to mac and cheese

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After the breakfast section, say: You might try adding green onions, red or green bell peppers or chopped spinach to eggs or potatoes.

After the lunch section, say: Cucumbers, tomatoes, avocados or mushrooms are all good choices to add to your sandwich (be sure to use whole-grain bread to make your sandwich!).

After the dinner section, say: Top your pizza with extra veggies, grate squash or carrots and add to pasta sauces or soups and round out your meal with a side of steamed or microwaved vegetables.

## CHALLENGE YOURSELF TO EAT MORE COLOR

RED & PINK	ORANGE & YELLOW	GREEN	WHITE	BLUE & PURPLE
Beets	Acorn Squash	Asparagus	Bananas	Blackberries
Raspberries	Apricots	Broccoli	Cauliflower	Blueberries
Red Apples	Cantaloupe	Collard Greens	Mushrooms	Eggplant
Red Bell Peppers	Carrots	Green Beans	Onion	Figs
Strawberries	Oranges	Green Bell Peppers	Parsnips	Grape Juice
Tomatoes	Peaches	Kale	Potatoes	Plums
Watermelon	Sweet Potatoes	Spinach	Turnips	Red Cabbage

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Review the information on the slide.

Remind the group that it's important to "eat the rainbow." Eating a variety of color provides a wider range of nutrients.

Ask: Is there one color that's easier for you to include?

## VIDEO: Add More Color To Your Life



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PREP NOTE: Before the program, review the resource list for this lesson. Check the URL for the Add More Color video. If you aren't going to have a live Internet connection, download the YouTube video ahead of time to your computer. Or, skip this slide.

This video is available in English only.

Play the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DPF5LGzUwR>

## JOIN THE HEALTHY FOR GOOD MOVEMENT

**Get science-based information  
for you-based motivation.**

Healthy for Good™ is a movement  
to inspire you to lead a healthier life  
by taking one small step at a time.

Go to [heart.org/healthyforgood](https://heart.org/healthyforgood) to  
find tips, videos and recipes.



Review the information on the slide.

### POINT 3: Take Action for Better Access

**Fruits and vegetables are vital for good health, but not everyone has access to them.**

In many urban and rural communities, corner stores, convenience stores, bodegas and gas stations are the only places to buy food. These stores may have limited options and/or sell produce that's very expensive.



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Review the information on the slide.

Remind the group that all forms of fruits and vegetables count toward the daily goal: fresh, frozen, canned and dried. Those living in areas with less access should purchase what's available. Drain and rinse canned fruit to reduce the added sugar and canned vegetables to reduce the sodium.

## THE NEED FOR BETTER ACCESS

How frequently we eat fruits and vegetables often depends on whether we can buy them locally.

Neighborhood access to healthy food is a growing concern. Lack of access has a profound effect on diet quality.



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Read the information on the slide.

Say: People who live in areas with less access to healthy foods like fruits and vegetables regularly face transportation challenges and long trips to supermarkets and shopping centers. Their neighborhoods have lots of fast-food restaurants and convenience stores, which offer less-healthy options.

## HOW IS AHA ADVOCACY HELPING?

### AHA advocates for policies that:

- Increase the availability of and access to fruits, vegetables and other nutritious foods in all communities.
- Improve the foods available in schools, early care and educational settings and public places.



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The American Heart Association is rallying communities across the nation to help:

- Support state and local policies that increase access to healthy food and beverages, decrease access to unhealthy food and beverages, make it easier to eat healthy and drive industry innovation to improve the food and drinks we all need.
- Support policies that improve the foods and beverages available in schools, early care and educational settings and public places.
- Improve water access and safety in schools.



## TAKE ACTION IN YOUR COMMUNITY

1. **Contact your city and state leaders** to let them know what food access is like in your community.
2. **Find ways to spread the word about nutrition assistance programs**, such as SNAP, WIC and school meals.
3. **Assess the availability and affordability of fresh, frozen and canned fruits and vegetables offered by local retailers.** Create a petition to request more variety, improve affordability or advocate for better signage/placement.



Review the information on the slide

## TAKE ACTION IN YOUR COMMUNITY

4. **Meet with an after-school or daycare program representative** to discuss serving more fruits and veggies for snacks.
5. **Organize a letter-writing campaign and set up a meeting with state leaders.** For example, ask for funding to host a farmers' market in an under-served community.
6. **Head to HeartPowered.org** and then send a note to your Congressperson advocating for healthier meals at school.



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Review the information on the slide.

Ask: Are any of these advocacy ideas of interest to you?

Tell participants to review it at home and consider becoming involved in the work that's being done by Heartpowered.org

## CALL TO ACTION

- Add more color, crunch and flavor with produce.
- Embrace ways to include a variety of fruits and vegetables in your daily meals.
- Take action to help improve access to fruits and vegetables for everyone.
- Keep us informed -        
Follow us **@AmericanHeart** on social media and DM us to let us know how you're doing!



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Read information on the slide.

Thank everyone for coming.