



SOUTH CAROLINA FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

Affiliated with National Volunteer Outreach Network, Country Women's Council, U.S.A., Associated Country Women of the World and in partnership with Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service
SCFCL website: <http://www.scfcl.com>

Leader Training Guide

Food Myth – Veggies and Fruits from a Can Are Bad for You

Objectives:

1. To dispel the myth that (commercially) canned fruits and vegetables are unhealthy or bad to consume.
2. To offer ideas for increasing fruit and vegetable consumption by using canned fruits and vegetables.

Lesson Overview/Introduction:

Registered Dietitians probably agree most people do not consume enough fruits or vegetables. Many people proclaim to enjoy fruit and vegetables. However, they do not eat fruits and vegetables on a daily basis. Recent data show that only 33% of adults meet daily fruit requirements and only 27% of adults meet daily vegetable requirements. However, increasing fruit and vegetable consumption doesn't have to be a struggle. Why not add fruits and vegetables to the recipes and dishes you are already preparing? When it comes to nutrition, all forms of fruits and veggies do count – including commercially canned and home canned, fresh, frozen, dried, and 100% juice.

Lesson:

Many people are confused about the health of commercially canned (cc) foods, including vegetables and fruit. Contrary to what some people think, cc foods are considered “minimally processed” – most cc fruits and vegetables are packed within 100 miles of the field and packed at the peak of ripeness. Studies show that canned (commercially or home canned) foods provide needed nutrients that make up a healthy diet. Canned foods do not require preservatives, most are fat free, and some have higher nutrient content than the fresh version – for example, the vitamin A content is 3 times greater in ½ cup of canned pumpkin than in a half cup of fresh cooked pumpkin.

One of the concerns that some people have with cc vegetables is sodium content. While sodium is used in the canning process for vegetables, studies show that canned foods' contribution to sodium intake in people's diets is <1%. If you're still concerned about the sodium in cc vegetables, you can easily reduce the amount of sodium from cc vegetables by simply draining and rinsing the food in a colander. Draining alone reduces sodium by 35%; draining and rinsing reduces sodium by up to 41%. Additionally, there are many low- and reduced-sodium cc vegetable choices, and even a few with no sodium at all.

Some people are also concerned with the amount of added sugar in some cc fruits, however cc fruits account for <2% of added sugar in most American diets. The majority of added sugar in

people's diets comes from sweetened beverages and candy. To reduce the sugar content of cc fruits, consumers should look for fruit that is canned in 100% juice or in water. They can avoid much of the natural sugars in the juice by draining the fruit before eating it as well.

A few quick ideas for adding canned fruits and vegetables to your dishes:

Mix canned spinach and/or canned tomatoes into your pasta dish.

Add 'extra', canned veggies to soups, stews and salads. For example, add a cans of black beans, pineapple, and mandarin oranges to taco salad.

Added Note:

If you are on a special or therapeutic diet, or have been restricted in **any way** on your sodium or sugar/carbohydrate intake, please make sure to discuss this with your doctor. And always follow your doctor's instructions on any sodium or sugar/carbohydrate restrictions. For most people, draining and rinsing canned foods is probably enough to reduce the sodium and added sugar to a healthy level. However, individuals who are at risk of consuming too much sodium or carbohydrate (i.e. congestive heart failure, kidney disease, high sensitivity to sodium and blood pressure, edema, diabetes, etc.) should be knowledgeable of how their diet affects their health status.

The objective is to help people make general, healthy, affordable and convenient nutrition choices. You should always consider **your health status** and make subsequent nutrition / food choices within that context.

Lesson Summary:

Not only can cc fruits and vegetables be healthy, but they are convenient, accessible and affordable. Studies show that people who keep cc foods on hand are more likely to consume fruits and vegetables, and subsequently have a higher intake of vegetables and fruit than those who do not. You can improve the quality of your diet by adding cc fruits and vegetables into your healthy eating plan.

Suggested Activities:

Following are recipes that are nutritious, delicious, easy to prepare, and colorful to serve at meetings and gatherings. Both recipes include canned vegetables. Choose one or both recipes to demonstrate and serve at your meeting.

Black and White Bean Salad

1 can of Great Northern beans, rinsed and drained

1 can of black beans, rinsed and drained

1 ¼ C peeled , seeded and chopped tomato

¾ C diced sweet red pepper

¾ C diced sweet yellow pepper

¾ C thinly sliced green onions

½ C commercial salsa

¼ C red wine vinegar
2 T chopped fresh cilantro
¼ t salt (optional)
1/8 t freshly ground pepper
* Combine first 6 ingredients in a large bowl; stir gently to combine
* Combine salsa, vinegar, cilantro, salt, and pepper in a small bowl – stirring well.
* Pour salsa mixture over bean mixture, and toss gently to combine.
Serve over romaine lettuce or fresh baby spinach as a side.
Yield 10 servings (74 calories per serving).
Source: The Low-Fat Way to Cook – Oxmoor House 1993

Don't knock this one until you try it – delicious ☺

Apple Beet Salad

2 C shredded or chopped apple, unpeeled (Granny Smith work well)
1 can whole beets, drained, rinsed, and shredded or chopped (or 1 lb cooked beets, chopped)
¾ C sliced celery
1 T lemon juice
1 T honey
3 T chopped walnuts
* Combine all ingredients except walnuts, tossing gently
* Spoon each serving on fresh spinach or romaine lettuce and sprinkle with walnuts.
Yield: 6 - ½ cup servings
Source: Southern-Style Diabetic Cooking, Marti Chitwood, RD, CDE

Suggested Materials:

Provide a copy of the recipes for each member – see page 4.

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Sources/References:

www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org
www.mealtime.org
www.cansgetyoucooking.com
www.choosemyplate.gov

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