



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

Healthy Living as We Age.

Objectives:

The Participants will be able to:

1. Choose healthier foods in their homes.
2. Choose to be active during the day.
3. Practice an exercise every day.

Lesson Overview/Introduction:

Living alone is not an easy thing to do. We need to remember to make healthy choices in the foods that we eat, and in our daily activities. We know that we should eat healthy foods, but sometimes it is easier to just eat something that is easy to fix. Our daily choices can make an important difference in the way that we look and the way we act. It is also important that we take some time to get exercise every day - inside while seated in a chair - or outside if possible so we can soak up some sun and absorb some Vitamin D.

Have you forgotten your friend's birthday for the first time? Or found yourself in the bedroom when you meant to go to the kitchen? These are "senior moments" and can be frustrating. But we don't need to accept them as a result of aging. We can age-proof our brain. Our heart pumps about 20 percent of our body's oxygen-rich blood to the blood vessels in our brain, so it is no surprise that what is good for the heart is also good for the brain. Eating a healthy diet, getting regular exercise, not smoking and keeping our blood pressure and cholesterol under control all benefit the blood flow to the brain. High blood pressure can contribute to age-related cognitive decline, the process where arteries slowly clog and harden which has an impact on our brain health as well. Exercise is linked to better blood flow as well as improved cell function, and helps our mood and mental well-being.

Lesson:

We all know that our health is our most prized possession. About 85% of everyone over the age of 50 has some blockage of the arteries. Most of us do not have any symptoms. The cause of the blockage is partly due to high levels of LDL (low density lipoprotein) cholesterol particles floating around in our blood and low levels of HDL (high density lipoprotein) cholesterol particles. HDL clears out LDL, and we call LDL cholesterol "bad cholesterol" and HDL cholesterol "good cholesterol". We want to try to increase our HDL levels and decrease our LDL levels.

There are three lifestyle habits that can help decrease our LDL levels: eating the right foods, reaching and sustaining an ideal body weight, and developing an exercise routine. Eating the right foods to combat heart disease includes decreasing our intake of added saturated fat and sugar. Specifically, try to avoid foods that have been deep fried, or foods that have added butter or condiments. Choose low-fat or skim milk to decrease the saturated fat while still getting your calcium. Choose lean meat like chicken and fish or meat substitutes like beans and legumes to avoid saturated fat from your protein choices. Avoid beverages that have a lot of added sugar like sweet tea and soda. And as a treat, add nuts and olives to your dishes as these foods are sources of good fats.

Portion size is important for the lifestyle factor of “reaching and sustaining an ideal body weight”. Have you noticed the meals that you buy now have a LOT on the plate? If you eat it all you will probably get more calories than you need. If your plate is really full, ask for a take-out tray and box up half of it to take home for later. When you are eating at home, serve yourself a smaller, more reasonable portion. Most meals that we cook are much larger than what we need. If you are watching TV and having a snack, put your snack in a bowl instead of eating it out of the package. It is easy to eat too much when you are focused on a television program instead of what you are putting in your mouth.

Including good fats in your diet, avoiding saturated fats and added sugar in foods like those mentioned above, maintaining an ideal body weight, and finding an exercise routine that you can stick with are all ways to improve your cardiovascular health. Following these guidelines can help lower your LDL cholesterol levels (“Bad Cholesterol”) and raise your HDL cholesterol levels (“Good Cholesterol”). Know your cholesterol numbers and heed their warnings. Talk to your doctor about strategies that can help you to achieve the most optimal numbers for you. Always take your prescribed medications, and talk to your doctor about any changes you make in your lifestyle habits.

Suggested Activities:

Walk with a friend or a partner. Do you get enough sleep? It is easier to get your walking exercise if you have had a good night's rest. At the first of the week, plan when and how long you want to walk or exercise. It is easier to exercise if you have a plan in place. Try to go outside to walk during nice weather to get your exercise but remember to talk with your doctor before you do any exercise routine.

If you feel that you cannot walk to exercise, plan an exercise program while sitting in a chair, such as the "J" exercise, where you sit in your chair and use your arms to form the letter "J". With your right arm, stretch your fist and arm up as high as you can, then bring it down and cross it over your chest. Then do the same thing with your left arm (this will be a backwards "J") - repeat each of these several times. Then, using your right arm again, stretch it downwards as far as you can and then bring it down and cross over your lap. Repeat this with the left arm (also a backwards "J"). Begin with several of each of these and try to increase to 10.

If you get hungry between meals, go ahead and eat a healthy snack, like a piece of fruit, or a small healthy salad - this will help you keep from overeating at your next meal. Remember, keep yourself well hydrated. Drink at least eight 8 ounce glasses of water a day. This sounds like a lot, but in hot weather you will need it. It is much worse on an older person if you do not get enough water. Also, remember to do a little light stretching to warm up before you start to walk. Remember, you need to get out into the sun so you will absorb some Vitamin D.

Lesson Summary:

Remember, for healthy living:

- Drink water or diet drinks instead of juice or soda.
- Choose Whole grain bread instead of white bread.
- Fill one-half of your dinner plate with vegetables.
- Eat fruit instead of drinking bottled fruit juice.
- Split your restaurant meal with a friend, or take half home with you.
- At restaurants, choose entrees that are not fried.
- Save eating sweets for special occasions and keep the portion size small.
- Sit down when you eat, eat slowly and enjoy your food
- Exercise daily - either walking or sitting.

Remember, growing older is not for sissies. But we can help make it better if we make a daily plan, post it on the wall and remember to follow it every day. Eat healthy foods, drink plenty of water and get some exercise either sitting down in your chair or out walking to get a little sun every day.

Suggested Materials:

- Opportunities for Individuals with Memory Impairment Michelle Williams, BS, AN
- Role of Rehabilitation with Seniors Valerie Schereck, MSN, ANPC
- Therapeutic Thematic Arts Programming for Older Adults, Dr. Linda Levine Madone
- Active Seniors - Karl Beret Gustafson, MS
- Let's Get Moving Betsy Best-Martini, MS, CTRS, ACC

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Sources/References:

Creative Forecasting Publication for Activity Professionals