

# Building Healthy Meals with WIC Foods: Fruits & Veggies

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**Who:** Parents and caregivers of children participants

**Why:** Nevada WIC parents and caregivers want meal and snack ideas using WIC foods. This class will providing participants with meal and snack ideas using fruits and vegetables.

It is also important for participants to evaluate daily fruit and vegetable intake to determine what changes they can make to their family's diet.

**Time:** Approximately 30 minutes

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**Objectives:** By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Explain why it is important to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables
- Demonstrate the ability to meet recommended daily amounts
- Identify one solution for not eating enough fruits and vegetables
- State one new tip or recipe idea for using more fruits and vegetables

## Lesson

**Overview:**

1. Introduction
2. Concept: Eating a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables
3. Concept: Recommended daily amounts
4. Concept: Exploring solutions (OPTIONAL)
5. Concept: Tips and recipe ideas for fruits and vegetables
6. Closing

**Materials:** Provided by WIC State:

- Handout: Nutrition Matters 7 Ways – Fruits and Vegetables
- USDA Fruit and Vegetable Flash Cards
- Activity Sheet Handout: Try Something New with Fruits & Vegetables
- Incentive: Fruit and Vegetable Cutting Board

Provided by Local Agency:

- Whiteboard or flip chart

## Introduction

- Welcome participants
- Give overview of class session
- Introductions
  - Make sure to include children, if present, in the introductions activity

**Example:** "Good morning/afternoon! Welcome to the 'Building Healthy Meals with WIC Foods' class. During this class we will review the benefits of fruits and vegetables and meal and snack ideas using fruits and vegetables. The class is no longer than 30 minutes long and we will use

this time to share some ideas. Let's introduce ourselves. I'll start: my name is \_\_\_\_\_"

 **Icebreaker:** For this lesson plan, try a fruit and vegetable sharing icebreaker. Ask participants to partner up and share their names and the name(s) of their children. Then ask partners to share with each other a fruit or vegetable that their family enjoys. After about 1 – 2 minutes, ask each participant to share the name of their activity partner and child/children and their family's favorite fruit or vegetable.

### Concept: Eating a Variety of Fruits & Vegetables

- **Activity**

"Let's do an activity that will show us why it is important to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables. In this activity, we will discuss the health benefits for different colored fruits and vegetables. Let's start with purple/blue colored fruits and vegetables."

- Find the blackberry flash card and read out loud the "Wanted For" section.
  - **OPTIONAL:** Ask volunteers to take turns reading the "Wanted For" section.

"The blackberry is wanted for its sweet and juicy fruits, which is loaded with vitamin C and also a good way to add fiber to your meal plan. Eating blackberries helps kids eat smart to play hard."

- Refer to "Eating a Variety of Colorful Fruits and Vegetables Health Benefits" Facts Box below and read fiber and vitamin C health benefits and good sources.

"Vitamin C helps heal cuts and wounds and keeps teeth and gums healthy. Examples of good sources include apricots, bell peppers, broccoli, cauliflower, lemon and lime. Dietary fiber has been shown to have a number of beneficial effects, including decreased risk of coronary heart disease and keeping digestion problems away. Examples of good dietary fiber sources include apples, pears, raspberries spinach, broccoli, and green beans."

Repeat this exercise for red, orange/yellow, green, and white or tan/brown colors.

- **NOTE:** If time is limited, pick only 3 or 4 colors to use in the activity

"As you can see, it is important to eat a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables because different colors and types give us a variety of vitamins and minerals. Keep in mind you don't need to eat all of these colors every day. But it's recommended to eat a variety throughout the week."

"Take a moment to think about what fruits and vegetables you and your family have eaten in the past couple of days. What color group is missing?"

- Allow a few moments. Ask participants to share what fruit and vegetable color group is missing from their diet.

## EATING A VARIETY OF COLORFUL FRUITS AND VEGETABLES HEALTH BENEFITS:



- **Calcium:** Essential for healthy bones and teeth. It is also needed for normal functioning of muscles, nerves and some glands. **Good sources:** collard greens, spinach, turnip greens, calcium fortified juice.
- **Fiber:** Dietary fiber has been shown to have a number of beneficial effects, including decreased risk of coronary heart disease. **Good sources:** apple, blackberries, pear, raspberries spinach, broccoli, green beans, onion, oranges, artichoke, sweet potato.
- **Folate:** Adequate folate intake may reduce a woman's risk of having a child with a brain or spinal cord defect. **Good sources:** asparagus, broccoli, collard greens, spinach, strawberry, artichoke, beets, blackberries, cantaloupe, cauliflower, papaya.
- **Iron:** Necessary for healthy blood and normal functioning of all cells. **Good sources:** spinach, dried apricots.
- **Magnesium:** Magnesium is necessary for healthy bones and is involved with more than 300 enzymes in your body! Inadequate levels may result in muscle cramps and high blood pressure. **Good sources:** spinach, artichoke hearts, butternut squash, okra.
- **Potassium:** May help maintain a healthy blood pressure. **Good sources:** banana, broccoli, cherries, kiwi, sweet potato, tomato.
- **Vitamin A:** Keeps eyes and skin healthy and helps protect against infections. **Good sources:** Apricots, cantaloupe, carrot, collard greens, grapefruit, lettuce, mango, spinach, sweet potato, tomato, watermelon, asparagus, celery, okra.
- **Vitamin C:** Helps heal cuts and wounds and keeps teeth and gums healthy. **Good sources:** apricot, bell pepper, broccoli, cauliflower, grapefruit, lemon, lime, onion, papaya, summer squash, watermelon and more!

Information retrieved from "Fruits & Veggies More Matters website <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/key-nutrients-in-fruits-and-vegetables>

### Concept: Recommended Daily Amounts

"Keep in mind the color group missing from your meals and snacks while we look at the recommended daily servings of fruits and vegetables. For adults, a general recommendation is to eat 5 to 9 servings of fruits and vegetables. For children, it is a little less. A serving is about a cup, depending on the type of fruit or vegetable."

- **Activity**

- Ask participants to turn to pg. 2 of the "Try Something New with Fruits & Vegetables" Worksheet

"Eating 5 - 9 servings of fruits and vegetables means including a fruit or vegetable at each meal and snack. Let's take a look Activity 3 One Day Sample Meal. You will see each meal and snack is missing a fruit or vegetable. Complete the meal plan by adding at least one fruit or vegetable to each meal and snack. Remember the color group that was missing from your previous day's meals and see if you can add that color to this meal plan."

- Provide time for participants to complete. Ask for a few participants to share.

- **OPTIONAL:** Complete the activity as a group

### **FRUIT & VEGETABLE DAILY RECOMMENDATIONS:**

MyPlate provides more specific daily recommendations:

- **Children 2 to 8 years**
  - Fruit: 1 – 1 ½ cups
  - Vegetables: 1 – 1 ½ cups
- **Adults**
  - Fruit: 1 ½ - 2 cups
  - Vegetables: 2 – 3 cups

What counts as a serving?

- **Fruit:** 1 cup of fruit or 100% fruit juice, or ½ cup of dried fruit can be considered as 1 cup from the fruit group
- **Vegetables:** 1 cup of raw or cooked vegetables or vegetable juice, or 2 cups of raw leafy greens can be considered as 1 cup from the vegetable group

### **Concept: Exploring Solutions (OPTIONAL)**

*"As caregivers, we need to encourage our children to eat fruits and vegetables. It's also important to set a good example by eating fruit and vegetables every day, with meals and snacks. There are many reasons people give for not eating enough fruit and vegetables. Let's talk about some of those reasons now so we can find some solutions."*

- **Activity**

- On a whiteboard or flip chart, write down **"Time"**

*"Time is an issue many people give as a reason for not eating enough fruits and vegetables. Raise your hand if you agree that time is a reason for you and your family."*

- Ask participants to share their thoughts about a fruit or vegetable that is time consuming to prepare. Instructor can also share a personal story.
- Ask participants to share ideas for making fruit and vegetables less time consuming. Write ideas discussed on the whiteboard or flip chart. If participants need some help coming up with ideas, refer to general ideas below.
  - **Additional ideas:**
    - Buy grab and go foods: apples, ripe plums, pears, grapes, carrots, and celery. Wash and store these foods in refrigerator so that they are ready to eat
    - Vegetable juice and 100% fruit juice (encourage minimal intake): For children 1 to 6 years, ½ to ¾ cup maximum
    - Buy extra frozen vegetables which are easy to cook in the microwave or add to a can of soup or a casserole
    - Buy canned fruit to add to cereals, yogurts, smoothies or make a fruit salad
    - Roasting vegetables such as carrots, potatoes, bell peppers, squash, and mushrooms is a quick and easy way to prepare tasty vegetables
    - Use frozen, fresh, or canned fruits to make a smoothie

"Another issue many people give for not eating enough fruits and vegetables is the cost. Raise your hand if you agree with this."

- Write **"Cost"** on the whiteboard or flip chart
- Ask participants to share their thoughts on the cost of fruits and vegetables

"What are some ideas or tips you have used to buy fruits and vegetables at a low cost? Let's come up with some ideas together."

- Allow time for participants to answer. If participants need some help coming up with ideas, refer to general Ideas below.
  - **Additional ideas:**
    - Buy fruits and vegetables that are in season
    - Buy discount or bulk
    - Compare price of fruit and vegetable per pound with typical junk food, like cookie or chips. Example: one pound bag of potato chips cost about \$4.00 and one pound of potatoes costs about \$0.69 cents.
    - Buy canned and frozen fruits and vegetables and stock up if on sale.

"Many parents tell me how difficult it is to get their kids to eat fruit and vegetables. What are some tips or ideas you would have for these parents?"

- Write **"Kids don't like fruits or vegetables"**
- Write participants responses on whiteboard or flipchart
  - **Additional ideas:**
    - Children are more likely to eat food they helped make. Include children in meal preparation by asking them to:
      - Help fold or wrap. For example, wrap apples, corn or potatoes in aluminum foil.
      - Help mix ingredients. Children can use a spoon to stir dry cereal, dried fruit, pretzels and peanuts together.
      - Help measure or pour ingredients.
      - Peel foods such as bananas, corn, oranges or a hardboiled egg.
      - Crack the shell of raw eggs needed to make omelets with veggies or for use in other recipes.
      - Mash foods with a fork or potato masher, including bananas, cooked potatoes or cooked beans.
    - When grocery shopping, get children interested in fruit and vegetables by talking about the shape, color and origin of the fruits and vegetables being purchased.
    - Continue to offer fruits and vegetables even if children refuse.

### Concept: Tips and Recipe Ideas for Fruits and Vegetables

- **Activity**

"Now let's explore different ways to use fruits and vegetables. As you know, WIC offers fresh, frozen and canned fruits and vegetables. Let's discuss some meal and snack ideas using WIC fruits and vegetables."

- Offer "7 Ways to Eat More Fruits and Vegetables" handout

"This handout provides easy ways to add more fruits and vegetables to your family's diet. Let's review some of these ideas together."

- Read and discuss the entire handout or a few main points if time is limited.
- **OPTIONAL:** Ask for volunteers to read each tip.

"What are some ways you use fruits and vegetables at meal or snack times with your children?"

- Listen and affirm.

#### **ADDITIONAL IDEAS FOR EATING MORE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES:**

- Add a can of veggies to a can of soup or onions, mushrooms, bell peppers to a jar of spaghetti sauce.
- Make a rainbow lasagna by placing shredded carrots, sliced yellow bell peppers, and chopped spinach into each layer of lasagna. For pickier eaters, try pureeing the vegetables into the sauce.
- Color your pizza with bell pepper, broccoli, spinach and pineapple or spice up taco dinner with peppers cucumbers, and avocados.
- Try spaghetti squash instead of pasta, topped with sauce and a mix of your favorite veggies. Find out more at <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/>
- "Cooking with Kids" by California WIC is a great resource for meal and snack ideas using WIC foods.



#### **Closing**

- **Summarize what was covered in class:**  
"Today we covered the health benefits of fruits and vegetables, solutions to some reasons for not eating enough fruits and vegetables, and finally, ways recipes and tips for using your WIC foods to get more fruits and vegetables into your family's diet."
- **Assist participants with setting a nutrition goal:**  
"Take a minute to talk with your partner about one thing you learned in class that you think you could try with your family."
  - Allow 1 – 2 minutes. Ask participants to share. Affirm responses and thank participants for sharing.
- **Thank participants for their participation.**