

## Ohio SNAP-Ed Adult & Teen Programs Lowering Sodium When Eating Out

**Task Topic:** MyPlate

**Task Title:** Lowering Sodium When Eating Out

**Teaching Message(s):** ☒ Use food labels to make better choices.  
☒ Be physically active for at least 30 minutes most days of the week.

**Resources:** Adapted from *ChooseMyPlate.gov*, *Dietary Guidelines*, The Salt Institute

### Objectives for the Task:

1. Describe how to use food labels to choose foods lower in sodium.
2. Identify ways to choose lower-sodium options from restaurant offerings.

### Materials Needed for the Task (including Handouts):

- 12 copies of menus from fast-food restaurants (McDonald's, Subway, Arby's) – enough for small groups to have several to share
- Calculators

### General Materials List:

- |                    |                                |               |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| • Flip chart paper | • Post-it notes                | • Index cards |
| • Thought box      | • Markers                      | • Pens        |
| • Highlighters     | • Masking tape                 | • Name tags   |
| • VOICE principles | • Participant evaluation forms |               |

### Key Points to Review:

- Introduce yourself. Give brief description of the program (program name, length of sessions, duration of program).
- Include your purpose as the facilitator (i.e. to introduce ideas that are supported by research, to give them the tools to make informed decisions about areas that affect their health & nutritional needs, and to identify topics that might be covered based on the curricula used in the program).
- Review the V.O.I.C.E. Principles.
- Ask participants to sign in on the SNAP-Ed sign-in sheet.
- Remember to pass out the appropriate participant evaluation form at the end of the session, making sure to read the questions out loud to the participants.

### Transition:

Last time we met, we learned about .... We also learned about .... Who would like to share their experiences with ...? Today we will be discussing sodium in restaurant foods and how



we can choose lower-sodium fare when we dine out.

Let's do a few stretches to begin the class. We like to begin all of our SNAP-Ed programs with a spotlight on physical activity because it is crucial to maintaining good health. Regular movement helps with weight management because it contributes to energy balance – using up the energy you take in from the foods and drinks you consume.

*Physical activity guidelines can be found at the following websites:*

- Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion: [www.health.gov/paguidelines/](http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/)
- CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/index.html>
- President's Council on Fitness, Sports, and Nutrition: [www.fitness.gov/being-active/physical-activity-guidelines-for-Americans/](http://www.fitness.gov/being-active/physical-activity-guidelines-for-Americans/)

### Anchor

When you go out to eat, how do you know how much sodium is in the food you want to order? How could you find this information out?

*Write down answers on flip chart paper as you discuss.*

### Add

Fast food and restaurant meals usually have a lot of added salt. When you do choose to eat out, ask ahead to check how much sodium is in the dish you are thinking about ordering. Many restaurants will give you nutrition information if you ask, or, if you have Internet access, you can often check out nutrition facts online at the restaurant's website.

When eating at a fast food restaurant, keep toppings like lettuce and tomatoes, while skipping the cheese. Beware of sauces, marinades, and condiments, which pack a lot of sodium in a small amount (for example, 1 tablespoon of teriyaki sauce has 690 mg of sodium). Adding 1 tablespoon each of ketchup and relish to your hamburger can tack on an additional 289 mg of sodium to the amount in your sandwich.

At sit-down restaurants, high-sodium menu items include soups, appetizers made with cheeses or meats, casserole-style entrées, and rice pilaf side dishes. Entrées that include sauces also tend to be high in sodium, so ask for your entrée to be prepared without the sauce or very little sauce. Steamed vegetables without added salt and salads with dressing on the side are other menu items that are good choices when watching your sodium intake.

### Apply

*Have participants separate into pairs or small groups. Pass out copies of fast food restaurant nutrition information – one restaurant per group.*

We will use our label reading skills to compare foods based on the amount of sodium they contain. Looking at the copies of your restaurant's nutrition information, find the column where sodium is listed. Use a highlighter to highlight the column.



Let's figure out the amount of sodium in a "typical" fast food meal that consists of a sandwich, fries, and a drink. Find a medium-sized sandwich, fries or chips, and soft drink on your group's restaurant nutrition information sheet. Using one Post-it note for each food item, write down the amount of sodium in each. Next, add up the total amount of sodium the meal contains. What surprises you about what you learned?

Now, "shake the salt" from the meal you just created. For each food, find a lower-sodium food on your restaurant's menu that you could order to take the place of the higher-sodium food. How much less sodium did the second meal contain? What did you find most surprising about this activity?

### Away

How might what you learned influence how you order at restaurants? What steps will you need to take to make that happen?

### **Facilitator's Notes:**

### **Facilitator's Checklist:**

- ☐ Have I gathered all of the pertinent materials needed for the lesson?
- ☐ Did I spend the requisite amount of time covering each targeted message?
- ☐ Did I apply the principles of adult learning to my program?
- ☐ Did I create a comfortable and functional learning atmosphere?
- ☐ Did I fill out a Program Log with the necessary program information?
- ☐ Did I ensure that all participants signed the sign-in sheet?
- ☐ Did I read the survey instrument out loud to the participants?
- ☐ Did I collect all requisite survey instruments needed for today's lesson?

