Food Basket Basics: Using the Supermarket as a Nutrition Learning Tool
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Approved for 1 CPE (Level 2) by the American Dietetic Association Commission on Dietetic Registration
ConAgra Foods Science Institute

- With a mission of:

  Promoting Dietary and related Choices affecting Wellness by linking evidence-based Understanding with Practice
Learning Objectives

- Describe at least three sources of consumer confusion when selecting foods consistent with dietary recommendations.

- Explore at least five common misconceptions regarding planning meals and selecting food to achieve health guidelines.

- Discuss potential roles for health professionals to leverage the supermarket to provide science-based and practical messages regarding food choices.

- Identify at least three strategies to use to encourage clients to make sustainable, healthful food choices.
Food Basket Basics: Using the Supermarket as a Nutrition Learning Tool

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Giant Eagle Nutrition Team
Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.

Chinese Proverb
Introduction:

- Our health and that of our clients has a strong link to nutrition and lifestyle choices.

- “Nutrition knowledge is of little value if it only helps people make As on a test. The value comes when people use it to improve their diet.”

  Sizer and Whitney

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Improving Dietary Choices

- When the goal is eating to meet dietary guidelines for a health-smart lifestyle, science-based knowledge should enter the picture.
- Food should be the first source for the nutrients we need. American Dietetic Association (ADA)
- Eating with health in mind involves making choices that center on food.

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Think about your own choices concerning food:

- Why do you choose to eat?
- What motivates your choices on:
  - time,
  - place,
  - the foods or beverages?

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WHY.......do you eat?

- It tastes good.
- You are hungry.
- It’s there.
- Boredom
- Traditional or culture
- To provide our body with the nutrients and energy we need to be healthy.
Food is more than calories...

- Home style and Comfort
- Foodie and upscale
- Fresh, organic, natural, local
- Vegetarian
- “Health oriented” - Carbs, Protein, Fat
- Fortified and Supplemented
- Safety
- Love

• And is more than nutrition!

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Do you and your clients?

- Eat to live?
- Live to eat?

Either way, choices are involved!

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Choices

• Making health-smart choices requires a knowledge of:
  ◦ health and personal needs.
  ◦ how to choose and prepare food to meet health needs.

• Going from knowledge to action is easier with:
  ◦ practice
  ◦ coaching

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Choices

- And it helps if there is a “translator” to bring nutrition alive with a science-base interpretation.
- The supermarket or the tools found in a supermarket can shape and reinforce “health-smart choices”:
  - especially if a registered dietitian or food-savvy health professional is available to help in the translation!

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Supermarket provides a setting to:

- Use all senses – smell, see, hear, feel, and even taste. What better way is there to experience and to “learn”?
- Read labels.
- Compare ingredients.
- Find the values.
- Discuss how to select and store food.
- Learn more on how to prepare.
- Combine foods visually for a meal.

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Objectives - Participants will:

- Describe at least three sources of consumer confusion when selecting foods consistent with dietary recommendations.
- Explore at least five common misconceptions regarding planning meals and selecting food to achieve health guidelines.
- Discuss potential roles for health professionals to leverage the supermarket to provide science-based and practical messages regarding food choices.
- Identify at least three strategies to use to encourage clients to make sustainable, healthful food choices.
What are you up against?

How can the supermarket...and the tools available help?

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Objective: Describe at least three sources of consumer confusion when selecting foods consistent with dietary recommendations.

- **Media mania**
  Communication has become instant with the internet...and requires little or no documentation or time to become a message or sound bite.

- **Tips:** Don’t bite until you know the source. Establish and use your own credible resources.

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Objective: Describe at least three sources of consumer confusion when selecting foods consistent with dietary recommendations.

• ??Experts??
Nutrition is “in” and anyone who eats or has “read something” about nutrition and health has an opinion, a blog, a platform, a testimonial (or 2) can sound like an “expert”

Tip: Speaking of “experts”, make sure an RD is on your list as well as a person who is credible in CAM, an MD, Pharmacist, RN.
Objective: Describe at least three sources of consumer confusion when selecting foods consistent with dietary recommendations.

- Jumping to conclusions style science Studies (even those with validity) hit the internet and other media as fact before they qualify as evidence based and defensible and are translated to actionable messages.

- **Tip:** Before you … the health professional … join the buzz, check for the facts. Resources are listed at the end but one good source is [http://eatright.org](http://eatright.org). and the EAL.
Objective: Describe at least three sources of consumer confusion when selecting foods consistent with dietary recommendations.

• **Messages in limbo**
  The speed of communication, the hunger for information and “answers” seems to feed messages that contradict or change. Eat less salt…BUT salt can keep some foods safe from food-borne illness. Eat more fruits and veggies….BUT watch the natural sugar level in fruits…..is it right, wrong, changing?????

• **Tip:** Check out the resources.
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Objective: Explore at least five common misconceptions regarding planning meals and selecting food to achieve health guidelines.

- **Shop the perimeter at the supermarket**

When you shop the perimeter of the store you miss the values, nutrition, and health benefits of frozen and canned foods.

- **Tips:** Focus on shopping for nutrient sources.
  - Suggest making a list that puts the client on track to shop for needed foods by category.
  - Shop for health in all areas. – Plan, list, compare.
Objective: Explore at least five common misconceptions regarding planning meals and selecting food to achieve health guidelines.

• But you can’t eat healthy and keep costs down
  Yes it is more difficult but it is possible….and requires planning and emphasizing nutrient density.

• Tips: Help clients search out the values that fit their needs.
  ◦ Lists and Flyers
  ◦ Seasonal produce
  ◦ Buy on sale and freeze????
  ◦ Bagged apples/potatoes
  ◦ Coupons????
  ◦ Store brands
  ◦ Pricing (is it 2 for $1.00 or 55cents each or 50 cent each if you only buy one? (store policies)
  ◦ Cost of low nutrient dense foods and “add ons”
Objective: Explore at least five common misconceptions regarding planning meals and selecting food to achieve health guidelines.

- **Buy fresh**…(often combined with buy local)

  Why? For nutrition? Buy local is great (and supermarkets do this). This can support for the local economy. But…what/how far is local? What is in season in your local area right now?

- **Tips:**
  - Know the definition (or lack of definition) of fresh.
  - Focus on how to shop, store, prepare for peak nutrition.
  - Compare fresh, frozen, canned…for cost, ease, nutrition.

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Objective: Explore at least five common misconceptions regarding planning meals and selecting food to achieve health guidelines.

- Buy Organic
  There are certification definitions for foods labeled as organic. Ask why? Nutrition? Safety?


  National Organic Program

- **Tips:** There may be reasons why one might consider a food that is certified organic but other factors should be discussed with client (cost, availability).
  - Know the guidelines and the research…it is a choice.
Objective: Explore at least five common misconceptions regarding planning meals and selecting food to achieve health guidelines.

- I don’t have time to plan and cook meals.
  - So is it less hassle and time? What about cost?

Tips: Why cook? ....Cost, time, nutrients.

- Compare….time, cost and nutrition to order a pizza or chicken dinner ….vs. making a meal at home (scratch, speed-scratch or frozen).
- Look for resources at the supermarket for meal planning including recipes, meal plans.
- Check out the “prepared” and frozen foods that are options to fit goals for nutrition and cost control.
- Know websites and sources that make it easier to plan meals: Example: http://www.readyseteat.com/

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Objective: Explore at least five common misconceptions regarding planning meals and selecting food to achieve health guidelines.

- **Nutrition Glitz and Glamour**
  
  So what do I believe?
  
  - Sea salt instead of the usual?
  - Or is it …avoid sodium?
  - Avoid High Fructose Corn Syrup
    
    - And while you are at it…anything with sugar on the label?
  - What about whole grains…do I have to give up my white bread that I love?
  - Should I be eating “gluten free”?
  - Should I be looking for fiber???

- **Tips:** Know current research. Reference the EAL of the American Dietetic Association
  
  - Stay current on labeling and regulatory issues.
  - Think moderation!
Objective: Explore at least five common misconceptions regarding planning meals and selecting food to achieve health guidelines.

- Making claims for the game without knowing the rules! Eat “healthy”, Stick with “healthy foods”.
  - What is a “healthy” food?
    There is a regulatory definition for label purposes:
    You may use the term “healthy” or related terms as an implied nutrient content claim on the label or in labeling of a food that is useful in creating a diet that is consistent with dietary recommendations if the food meets the conditions for total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and other nutrients. *FDA Guidance for Industry: A Food Labeling Guide, Appendix B.*

- Tips: Be aware of FDA definitions and terms and use them appropriately.
  - Avoid the “good and bad” food images.
Objective: Discuss potential roles for health professionals to leverage the supermarket to provide science-based and practical messages regarding food choices.

What are some potential roles for health professionals?

◦ Partner with RDs in supermarkets or with owners/managers.
◦ Be an RD “coach”.
◦ Use the supermarket for “hands-on” learning.
Leveraging the Supermarket as a Tool

- Know your audience.
  - What are their diagnosed health needs that affect dietary choices (rather than their perceptions)? By whose diagnosis?
    - Diabetes, gluten free, food allergies, lower Na, K+, weight management, heart, edentulous.
  - Who cooks, shops, prepares food for them and what are the limitations?
    - Skill
    - Equipment
    - Time
    - $$$$
Leveraging the Supermarket as a Tool

- Know your audience.
  - What are their family or personal responsibilities or limitations that might affect their ability to make changes that affect what they buy, eat, cook?
    - Children, older adults, significant others
    - Work, transportation
    - Skills and interest

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Leveraging the Supermarket as a Tool

- Know food...or find someone who does!
  - Be grounded in food science.
  - Stay current on food safety and safe handling.
  - Be able to discuss how to select, store, cook.
  - Take a cooking class or know your resources-
    - RD’s or consumer specialists on staff or in community
    - Store specialists
    - Chefs

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Leveraging the Supermarket as a Tool

- Know how to use the basic resources:
  - Food labels
  - Ingredient lists
  - Sales flyers (When do they come out?)
  - Sell by/use by and other dates on products
  - Product information books, recipes
  - Shelf talkers

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Objective: Strategies to encourage clients to make sustainable, health-smart food choices.

- Offer CHOICES not mandates.
- Let the client make the choices.
- Encourage small steps.
- Remember...why do we eat?????
- Put moderation as the guide- as long as the food isn’t life-threatening, can it be included?
- Avoid promises and generalizations – this can lead to discouraging results.

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Objective: Strategies to encourage clients to make sustainable, health-smart food choices.

Know your resources and refer when it isn’t your expertise.

- [http://www.eatright.org/](http://www.eatright.org/)
- [http://www.eatright.org/kids/](http://www.eatright.org/kids/)
- [http://www.foodinsight.org/](http://www.foodinsight.org/)
Review: Strategies to involve client in practice making sustainable, health-smart food choices.

- Encourage starting with a menu plan. Show a menu plan plate with \( \frac{1}{2} \) fruits and veggies, \( \frac{1}{4} \) grain, \( \frac{1}{4} \) protein source.

- Have flyers and ads and practice reading the flyers and ads to help select & plan.

- Help clients organize a basic stock on hand – pantry items list that includes health-smart choices.

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Review: Strategies to involve client in practice making sustainable, health-smart food choices.

- Walk the store and compare labels, prices, **choices**.
- Arrange a taste test of “new” foods...anyone for quinoa, kiwi, an alternative sweetener?
- Combine dietary guidelines with recipes, purchasing and storage tips.
- Offer cooking demonstrations.

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Strategies – Telling is not teaching

Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.

Chinese Proverb
Strategies – Telling is not teaching

Immerse your clients in the skills and knowledge to make “health-smart” choices!

A Giant Eagle Nutrition Team Proverb

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Thank You

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Resources:

- International Food Information Foundation (IFIC)
  - Food Insights Newsletter
  - Understanding Our Food Information Kit (Sept; 2010)
  - 2010 Food and Health Survey – Consumer Attitudes Toward Food Safety, Nutrition & Health.  
    http://www.foodinsight.org/
- Environmental Nutrition Newsletter.  
- Tufts University Health and Nutrition Newsletter.  
- Food and Health Communications Newsletter.  
- American Dietetic Association Position Papers
  http://www.eatright.org.
Questions?
Food Basket Basics: Using the Supermarket as a Nutrition Learning Tool

This webinar covered:

– Consumer understanding of selecting foods aligned with dietary recommendations can be compromised with contradictory media messages; inconclusive science presented as fact; lack of context with other studies.

– Health professionals can leverage supermarkets as client learning opportunities by being grounded in nutrition and food science; staying current on food safety and safe handling principles; knowing foods; being able to select, store and cook food. Know your resources, and don’t be afraid to use them.

– Involve clients in practicing making food choices with small, practical actions such as making a menu plan; use store flyers and information; walking the store and comparing labels, prices and choices.
Contact Information

- For CPE information: astachnik@rippelifestyle.com

- For recorded webcast and pdf download of PowerPoint: www.ConAgraFoodsScienceInstitute.com

- For future ConAgra Foods Science Institute Nutri-Bites<sup>sm</sup> webinars: www.ConAgraFoodsScienceInstitute.com
Tomatoes: The best liked but least recognized super food

Britt Burton-Freeman, PhD, MS
Kristi Reimers, PhD, RD

Date: March 15, 2011
2-3 pm EDT/1-2 pm CDT