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**Wellness Class 1: Developing Healthy Habits  
Lesson Plans**

## Wellness Class 1: Developing Healthy Habits

**Estimated Time Required:** 75 minutes

**Participant Workbook Section:** Developing Healthy Habits

**Class Overview:** The goal of this class is to provide an opportunity for individuals to consider the specifics of what it might take to create a new habit, or adjust an existing habit, that is practical for their lifestyle and can be implemented in a sustainable manner. This is the first class in the wellness series and the same steps outlined here to develop a healthy habit are revisited in following classes to help individuals consider how they can apply information from other classes into their lives. As the first class of the program, this is also a good time to review the program workbook.

### Learning Objectives

After completing this class, participants will be able to:

1. Understand how to navigate and use the program workbook to support learning.
2. Understand how habits can impact health.
3. Identify the areas of their life in which they desire habit change.
4. Articulate how habit change could impact their own life.
5. Create a plan for developing a desired habit that is practical and sustainable.
6. Identify the potential challenges to achieving desired habit change and brainstorm possible solutions.
7. Determine one small thing they will do today to get closer to their goal.

### Class Outline

- Welcome and Mindful Moment 15 min
  - *Engage in peer support*
  - *Build skill*
- How habits impact our health 5 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
- The challenges of exercising self-control 15 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Engage in peer support*
- Make a plan to develop your own healthy habit 35 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
- Closing and At-Home Activity 5 min
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
  - *Identify resources*

## Suggested Discussion Topics and Tips

Facilitators can utilize Breakout Rooms for increased personal social engagement. Suggested topics for this class:

- **Suggested breakout room questions:**
  - How could changing a current habit lead to better health for you? (Slide 15)
  - What challenges your willpower most? (Slide 31)
- **Suggested discussion prompts throughout class:**
  - What are the main reasons that you joined this program? (Slide 13)
  - What do you hope to get out of this program? (Slide 13)
  - What is one habit you'd like to start, stop or change? (Slide 36)
  - What challenges do you anticipate facing as you try to develop healthy habits? (Slide 41)
  - What is your why/motivation? (Slide 35)

## Sample Follow-Up Email

Hello!

**Thank you** for attending today's Project Age Well class on **Developing Healthy Habits!** [Resources listed at very end of e-mail].

**Class feedback.** Kindly **click this link** [insert link to survey] to complete the **anonymous** class feedback survey. Your feedback guides us to ensure we are discussing relevant content in a way that makes sense.

**Facebook group.** If you'd like to join our private Facebook group to connect further with participants past and present, please search for us at "**Project Age Well**" [insert link to Facebook group].

**Class takeaways. Finding balance between control and desire is key to developing healthy habits.** What challenges our self-control varies from person to person and if we can identify what challenges us most, we can think ahead to find possible solutions to these challenges. The good news is that our willpower is trainable and can be strengthened with practice!

**The following steps can help strengthen your willpower and help you develop and maintain healthy habits:**

- Pause and plan to develop a healthy habit. Developing a plan will help you determine how exactly you will meet your goal.
- Find your "why" or your motivation. Think about what inspires you and what you want your life to be like. Remember this when your self-control is challenged by desire.
- Set specific and realistic expectations that make sense for your lifestyle.

- Adjust your environment to make it easier to achieve your goals.
- Personalize and adjust your desired habits to make them more practical and enjoyable for you.
- Anticipate challenges and solutions to those challenges ahead of time so you don't revert to undesired behaviors.
- Start small by tackling one habit at a time to avoid overloading your brain. That way, if you slip up with one new habit, it won't impact your progress towards another new habit.
- Measure your progress to keep yourself accountable.
- Practice mindfulness by trying to acknowledge your thoughts without acting on them. Be patient with yourself and remember habit formation takes time!
- Put your plan into action!

**Next class.** We are looking forward to seeing you again next week for our class on **[day of the week] [date] at [time]** for our discussion on **[class topic]**!

In good health,  
[Instructor Names]

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**Resources.** Adding the resources discussed in class and from the workbook here, so that the links are clickable and easier to access:

**[NOTE: Be sure to add any additional resources that came up in class.]**

**Changing your Habits for Better Health**, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diet-nutrition/changing-habits-better-health>

**Habit Stack your Way to More Movement**, Monday Campaigns

<https://www.mondaycampaigns.org/move-it-monday/habit-stack-your-way-to-more-movement>

**How to Change Your Behavior and Habits**, Positive Psychology

<https://positivepsychology.com/behavior-change-techniques>

**The Power of Habit**, Charles Duhigg

<https://charlesduhigg.com/the-power-of-habit/>

**Don't stop thinking about tomorrow: Individual differences in future self-continuity account for saving**, Hal Ersner-Hershfield

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5dd05454f1a7771855d537b7/t/5deeae005cb2154c11cdefd0/1575923201213/Ersner-Hershfield\\_Garton\\_Ballard\\_Samanez-Larkin\\_Knuts\\_on\\_2009\\_JDM.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5dd05454f1a7771855d537b7/t/5deeae005cb2154c11cdefd0/1575923201213/Ersner-Hershfield_Garton_Ballard_Samanez-Larkin_Knuts_on_2009_JDM.pdf)

**ACL Disclaimer:** This project was supported, in part by grant number 990INNU0023, from the Administration for Community Living, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects with government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official ACL policy.

# Wellness Class 2: Building Social Connection Lesson Plans

## Wellness Class 2: Building Social Connection

**Estimated Time Required:** 75 minutes

**Participant Workbook Section:** Social Connection

**Class Overview:** A primary outcome of Project Age Well is to address social isolation by providing opportunities for social connection. This class provides various opportunities for connection. It also focuses on why these types of opportunities are beneficial to our health and how to foster more opportunities for social connection. The facilitator encourages participants to reflect on what type of connection best meets their needs and share ideas for increasing connection in their lives.

### Learning Objectives

After completing this class, participants will be able to:

1. Articulate how social connection impacts different aspects of our health.
2. Identify the quality and quantity of social connection that meets their needs.
3. Apply tips to maintain quality connections, such as practicing good communication, setting boundaries, and managing conflict.
4. Access a range of in-person and remote opportunities for social connection that meet their interest.

### Class Outline

- Welcome and Mindful Moment 10 min
  - *Engage in peer support*
  - *Build skill*
- How Social Connection Affects Our Health 10 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
- Finding & Maintaining the Right Quality and Quantity of Connection 40 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Build skill*
  - *Engage in peer support*
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
  - *Identify resources*
- Connect with a Game: Scattergories! 10 min
  - *Engage in peer support*
- Closing and At-Home Activity 5 min
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
  - *Identify resources*



## Suggested Discussion Topics and Tips

Facilitators can utilize Breakout Rooms for increased personal social engagement. Suggested topics for this class:

- **Suggested breakout room questions:**
  - How has social connection ever affected your physical health, mental health, or health habits? (Slides 31-35)
  - What do you look for most in a quality connection? (Slide 41-42)
  
- **Suggested discussion prompts throughout class:**
  - What ways can you think of to get a quick dose of social connection? (Slide 39)
  - Have you considered where your boundaries are at this point in time? (Slide 48)
  - Why might it be challenging to find or maintain connection with rigid boundaries? (Slide 48)
  - Why might it be challenging to find or maintain connection with porous boundaries? (Slide 48)
  - Can you think of how you might develop healthier boundaries? (Slide 48)
  - Where do you currently go to find social connection (in person or online)? (Slide 52)
  - What is one thing you will do this week to make a new connection or nurture an existing relationship? (Slide 55)

## Sample Follow-Up Email

Hello!

**Thank you** for attending today's Project Age Well class on **Social Connection!** [Resources listed at very end of e-mail].

**Class feedback.** Kindly **click this link** [insert link to survey] to complete the **anonymous** class feedback survey. Your feedback guides us to ensure we are discussing relevant content in a way that makes sense.

**Facebook group.** If you'd like to join our private Facebook group to connect further with participants past and present, please search for us at "**Project Age Well**" [insert link to Facebook group].

## **Class takeaways**

- Social wellness is the ability to relate to and connect with other people in our world. Although social wellness is not discussed as frequently as other elements of our health – such as our physical or mental health – experts have established that our ability to relate and connect with others can have a significant impact on our physical health, mental health, and health behaviors.

- Specifically, experts have found that:
  - 43% of seniors feel lonely on a regular basis.
  - There is a 45% increased risk of mortality in seniors who report feeling lonely.
  - Social isolation is more dangerous than obesity and as damaging to your health as smoking 15 cigarettes per day.
- Social connection can:
  - Increase our longevity, reduce physical pain, speed recovery from illness, lower blood pressure, and lower our risk of obesity and heart disease.
  - Lower risk of cognitive decline, dementia, and Alzheimer's.
  - Reduce risk of depression, anxiety, and other mental health disorders.
  - Increase motivation to exercise, eat well, adhere to medical regimens, and practice healthy habits.
- Just 10 minutes of daily social interaction can increase performance on cognitive assessments and give an important cognitive edge as we age.
- It is important to reflect on the quality and quantity of your social connections so that you can determine what type of connection is most fulfilling for you and maximize the health benefits.
- Some ways to find and maintain the quality and quantity of social connection that is right for include
  - Practicing communication skills
  - Setting personal boundaries
  - Managing conflict
  - Looking for connection in the right places

**Next class.** We are looking forward to seeing you again next week for our class on **[day of the week] [date] at [time]** for our discussion on **[class topic]**!

In good health,  
[Instructor Names]

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**Resources.** Adding the resources discussed in class and from the workbook here, so that the links are clickable and easier to access:

**[NOTE: Be sure to add any additional resources that came up in class.]**

**Institute on Aging's 24-hour toll-free Friendship Line** – crisis intervention hotline and a warm line for non-emergency emotional support calls: 800-971-0016;  
<https://www.ioaging.org/services/friendship-line>

**Well Connected** - virtual community that offers phone and online activities that build community through group conversations, games, and education:  
<https://covia.org/programs/well-connected/>

**Volunteer Match** - website that helps navigate local online and in-person volunteer opportunities: <https://www.volunteermatch.org/>

**Meetup** - website that provides online or in-person groups and events, filterable by interest and location: <https://www.meetup.com>

**Eventbrite** - website that provides online or in-person groups and events, filterable by interest and location: <https://www.eventbrite.com>

**How to Prevent Quarrels and Communicate Better with your Peers:**

<https://positivepsychology.com/communication-in-relationships/>

**Assumptions vs. Reality – the Effect of Isolation on the Older Adults in Our Lives:**

<https://connect2affect.org/assumptions-vs-reality/>

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# Wellness Class 3: Reducing Stress & Cultivating Mindfulness Lesson Plans

## Wellness Class 3: Reducing Stress & Cultivating Mindfulness

**Estimated Time Required:** 75 minutes

**Participant Workbook Section:** Reducing Stress & Cultivation Mindfulness

**Class Overview:** Due to the interconnectedness of stress and many other aspects of our health, each wellness class begins with a “Mindful Moment” in which participants practice a different mindfulness technique. In this class, additional mindfulness techniques are explored in more depth and practiced together so that participants can identify those that are the most effective for them and so that they have a variety to access when stressors arise. This class focuses on finding solutions to life’s stressors, with particular emphasis on how stress affects older adults and eating patterns.

### Learning Objectives

After completing this class, participants will be able to:

1. Reflect on their stressors and stress responses.
2. Understand how stress impacts our health.
3. Identify a variety of ways in which they can reduce stress.
4. Practice different mindfulness techniques.

### Class Outline

- Welcome and Mindful Moment 10 min
  - *Engage in peer support*
  - *Build skill*
- Reflecting on Our Stressors & How We Respond 15 min
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
- How Stress Affects Our Health 10 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
- Strategies for Minimizing Stress 20 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Engage in peer support*
  - *Identify resources*
- Practicing Mindfulness Techniques 15 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Build skill*
  - *Engage in peer support*
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
  - *Identify resources*

- Closing and At-Home Activity 5 min
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
  - *Identify resources*

### **Suggested Discussion Topics and Tips**

Facilitators can utilize Breakout Rooms for increased personal social engagement. Suggested topics for this class:

- **Suggested breakout room questions:**
  - How do you minimize stress? (Slide 27)
  - What do you need to feel safe and supported during times of stress? How do you get that support? (Slide 27)
- **Suggested discussion prompts throughout class:**
  - What are your sources of stress? (Slide 16)
  - What physical and behavioral responses does stress cause for you? (Slide 19)
  - What does taking care of yourself mean to you? (Slide 32)

### **Sample Follow-Up Email**

Hello!

**Thank you** for attending today's Project Age Well class on **Reducing Stress and Cultivating Mindfulness!** [Resources listed at very end of e-mail].

**Class feedback.** Kindly **click this link** [insert link to survey] to complete the ***anonymous*** class feedback survey. Your feedback guides us to ensure we are discussing relevant content in a way that makes sense.

**Facebook group.** If you'd like to join our private Facebook group to connect further with participants past and present, please search for us at "**Project Age Well**" [insert link to Facebook group].

### **Class takeaways**

- Common behavioral responses to stress include aggression, irritability, withdrawal, indecision, anger, lack of motivation, and sleep disruption.
- Common physical responses to stress include headaches, aches and pains, tense neck and shoulders, nausea, indigestion, palpitations, poor concentration, rapid breathing, perspiration, impaired memory, and chest pain.
- Experiencing stress for prolonged periods of time can lead to serious health conditions that can be more complicated to treat.

- As we age, our cells age, our heart fitness declines, our lung capacity declines, our risk of chronic illness increases, and our activity levels change. These factors make it more difficult to recover from stress as we get older, which could mean we are under stress for prolonged periods of time, which could increase our risk of developing serious health conditions.
- People respond to stress in different ways. Identifying how YOU respond to stress – behaviorally and physically – can help you determine when you need to pause and decide which strategies should be used to alleviate your stress.
- Mindfulness is a stress reduction technique that refers to the ability to know what is happening in your head, without letting it significantly affect your actions or behaviors.
- Mindfulness can be practiced in many ways, including meditation, deep breathing, yoga, body scanning, journaling, mood tracking, and mindful eating.

**Next class.** We are looking forward to seeing you again next week for our class on **[day of the week] [date] at [time]** for our discussion on **[class topic]**!

In good health,  
[Instructor Names]

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**Resources.** Adding the resources discussed in class and from the workbook here, so that the links are clickable and easier to access:

**[NOTE: Be sure to add any additional resources that came up in class.]**

**988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline** – phone number to call or text for free and confidential support for people in distress, 24/7: <https://988lifeline.org/>

**Emotional Wellness Toolkit, National Institute of Health** – educational materials on managing emotions, stress reduction, sleep, mindfulness, coping with loss, and more:  
<https://www.nih.gov/health-information/emotional-wellness-toolkit>

**Why Mindfulness is a Superpower: An Animation** – 3-minute video that describes how to practice mindfulness and how it is beneficial to our health: [Why Mindfulness Is a Superpower: An Animation](#)

**Breathing Meditation, UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center** – 5-minute breathing mediation video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFSc7Ck0Ao0>

**The Body Scan: A Beginner's Mindfulness Meditation** – 8-minute body scan video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kH-OQn5Ui8g>

**A 10-Minute Gratitude Practice to Notice, Shift and Rewire Your Brain** – 10-minute audio recording and text script: <https://www.mindful.org/a-10-minute-gratitude>

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# Wellness Class 4: Protecting Your Brain Health

## Lesson Plans

## Wellness Class 4: Protecting Your Brain Health

**Estimated Time Required:** 75 minutes

**Participant Workbook Section:** Brain Health

**Class Overview:** All brains – even the healthiest ones – are changing throughout our lives, as we age. This class aims to help participants identify normal versus abnormal changes, celebrate the improvements, and adapt to challenges. Importantly, participants explore when to seek professional advice about changes they notice. Participants learn how to help their brain health by addressing the many other elements of their health, such as physical, mental, or social health. To conclude, participants put their brains to work and share a laugh with some friendly competition.

### Learning Objectives

After completing this class, participants will be able to:

1. Articulate how and why our brains change.
2. Identify normal vs. abnormal brain changes and know when to consult an expert.
3. Understand what they can do to protect their brain health.
4. Apply practical tips for adapting with the changing brain.
5. Practice stimulating, non-stressful activities to protect their brain health.

### Class Outline

- Welcome and Mindful Moment 10 min
  - *Engage in peer support*
  - *Build skill*
- Changes to the Brain as We Age 20 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Engage in peer support*
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
- Protecting Our Brain Health 20 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Engage in peer support*
- Putting Our Brain to Work: Group Games & Activities 20 min
  - *Engage in peer support*
- Closing and At-Home Activity 5 min
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
  - *Identify resources*

## Suggested Discussion Topics and Tips

Facilitators can utilize Breakout Rooms for increased personal social engagement. Suggested topics for this class:

- **Suggested breakout room questions:**
  - Changes to brain health do not look the same for everyone. What have you experienced? (Slide 49)
    - What has stayed the same?
    - What has improved?
    - What has declined?
- **Suggested discussion prompts throughout class:**
  - What types of non-stressful, stimulating activities could you incorporate more of into your life to protect your brain health? (Slide 51)
  - What else do you do to adapt to your changing brain? (Slide 53)

## Sample Follow-Up Email

Hello!

**Thank you** for attending today's Project Age Well class on **Protecting Your Brain Health!** [Resources listed at very end of e-mail].

**Class feedback.** Kindly **click this link** [insert link to survey] to complete the **anonymous** class feedback survey. Your feedback guides us to ensure we are discussing relevant content in a way that makes sense.

**Facebook group.** If you'd like to join our private Facebook group to connect further with participants past and present, please search for us at "**Project Age Well**" [insert link to Facebook group].

## Class takeaways

- Our brain changes over time due to a variety of factors, including age-related changes, genetics, life-stressors, medications, injury, mood disorder, substance abuse, and brain diseases, such as Alzheimer's.
- Not all age-related changes to our brains are bad! Research shows that older adults often have more positive feelings, an improved ability to make connections about information, and better verbal, spatial, and abstract reasoning skills. We also continue to retain procedural memories, adapt to new challenges, and learn new things throughout our lives!
- Brain aging is inevitable to some extent, but it is not uniform; it affects everyone, or every brain, differently. Disability and dementia are not inevitable, and neuroscientists believe that our brains can remain relatively healthy as we age!

- The most important actions we can take to maintain our brain health include:
  - Quit smoking and limit alcohol
  - Manage blood pressure
  - Seek mental health treatment
  - Physical activity
  - Engage in stimulating, non-stressful activities
  - Learn a new skill
  - Engage in social activities
  - Maintain a healthy diet
  - Engage in healthy sleep hygiene
- Meditation has been proven to increase the size of parts of our brain that help us learn, keep our minds from wandering, and control our basic physical functions.
- Research on some brain games, such as crosswords and Sudoku is encouraging but not definitive in their ability to help humans reduce cognitive decline. If you enjoy brain games and they do not cause additional stress, they can be considered “stimulating, non-stressful activities”, which may be beneficial for your brain health, but they are most effective when practiced in addition to maintaining other aspects of your health, such as physical activity and social connection.

**Next class.** We are looking forward to seeing you again next week for our class on **[day of the week] [date] at [time]** for our discussion on **[class topic]**!

In good health,  
[Instructor Names]

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**Resources.** Adding the resources discussed in class and from the workbook here, so that the links are clickable and easier to access:

**[NOTE: Be sure to add any additional resources that came up in class.]**

**Healthy Aging vs. Diagnosis,** UCSF Memory and Aging Center:  
<https://memory.ucsf.edu/symptoms/healthy-aging>

**Combination of healthy lifestyle traits may substantially reduce Alzheimer’s disease risk,** National Institute on Health:  
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/news/combination-healthy-lifestyle-traits-may-substantially-reduce-alzheimers-disease-risk>

**Brain Health: Medicine, Age, and Your Brain, Administration for Community Living** – fact sheet outlining the impacts of medication on the older adult brain:  
<https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/triage/MedAgeBrain-FactSheet.pdf>

**Covia** – virtual phone and online activities that build community through group conversations, games, and education: <https://covia.org/programs/well-connected/>

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# Wellness Class 5: The Power of Sleep

## Lesson Plans

## Wellness Class 5: The Power of Sleep

**Estimated Time Required:** 75 minutes

**Participant Workbook Section:** The Power of Sleep

**Class Overview:** This class highlights how prioritizing sleep health will make us feel better and may also lead to better health outcomes. Participants discuss age-related sleep changes and how to address them. They leave with specific tips, screenings, and resources that can help improve the quality and quantity of their sleep.

### Learning Objectives

After completing this class, participants will be able to:

1. Understand what sleep does to our bodies and how it affects our health.
2. Name several consequences of a lack of sleep.
3. Dispel common sleep myths.
4. Reflect on challenges in getting enough quality sleep.
5. Brainstorm solutions to support good quality sleep.
6. Identify when they need to seek medical attention for more serious sleep disorders.
7. Track their sleep habits to help identify patterns and find solutions.
8. Take a Sleep Disorder Screening Survey.
9. Know how and where to look for sleep studies and specialists.

### Class Outline

- Welcome and Mindful Moment 10 min
  - *Build skill*
  - *Identify resources*
- True or False: Sleep Edition 10 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Engage in peer support*
- Sleep Needs & Challenges 25 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Engage in peer support*
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
- Developing Better Habits 25 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Engage in peer support*
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
  - *Identify resources*
- Closing and At-Home Activity 5 min

- *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
- *Identify resources*

## **Suggested Discussion Topics and Tips**

Facilitators can utilize Breakout Rooms for increased personal social engagement. Suggested topics for this class:

- **Suggested breakout room questions:**
  - What are your most common sleep challenges? (Slide 50-51)
  - Can you think of any ways to address your sleep challenges? (Slide 51)
- **Suggested discussion prompts throughout class:**
  - What stood out to you in the video about sleep deprivation? (Slide 44)
  - How many hours of sleep do you think adults 61+ should get each night? (Slide 45)
  - What are your tips for getting great sleep? (Slide 53)
  - Have you tried or considered trying to document your sleep challenges to identify patterns? (Slide 60)
  - Have you tried or considered trying to visit a sleep specialist or participate in sleep studies to address your sleep challenges? (Slide 66)

## **Sample Follow-Up Email**

Hello!

**Thank you** for attending today's Project Age Well class on **The Power of Sleep!** [Resources listed at very end of e-mail].

**Class feedback.** Kindly **click this link** [insert link to survey] to complete the **anonymous** class feedback survey. Your feedback guides us to ensure we are discussing relevant content in a way that makes sense.

**Facebook group.** If you'd like to join our private Facebook group to connect further with participants past and present, please search for us at "**Project Age Well**" [insert link to Facebook group].

## **Class takeaways**

- Guided imagery is a type of focused relaxation that has been [clinically proven](#) to reduce stress, relieve pain and even lessen the occurrences of insomnia among hospitalized patients. To find more like today's practice, click [here](#).
- A circadian rhythm is the natural process in which our bodies undergo physical, mental, and behavioral changes that prepare us for sleep. These changes occur



when environmental cues, like sunlight, cause the production and suppression of certain hormones.

- Each night, environmental cues, like sunlight, cause the production and suppression of certain hormones in our bodies. These environmental cues, in addition to the human need for sleep, let us know when to sleep each night.
- It takes about 90-120 minutes (about 2 hours) to go through one sleep cycle. Ideally, we should experience four to five cycles per night.
- While we sleep:
  - Our heart rate, breathing, blood pressure and body temperature decrease, allowing our heart and blood vessels a chance to rest and recover.
  - Our brains get rid of unnecessary information and store long-term memories.
  - Chemicals that strengthen our immune system start to circulate in our bodies.
  - Hormones called leptin and ghrelin, which control our hunger and satiety, are regulated.
  - The human growth hormone production increases, which repairs our muscles, organs and other cells.
- A lack of sleep can increase feelings of irritability and depression, slowing our reaction time, causing weight gain, worsening pain, aging skin, and much more. It can also increase our risk of more serious diseases, such as obesity, cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. To re-watch the video from today's class on [What Happens When You Don't Sleep, click here.](#)
- As we age, our bodies undergo changes that make it more difficult to get enough quality sleep and that make it more difficult to get all the benefits of sleep. For that reason, it is important that we practice positive sleep habits. To find a list of positive sleep habits, check your handouts from today's class!

**Next class.** We are looking forward to seeing you again next week for our class on **[day of the week] [date] at [time]** for our discussion on **[class topic]**!

In good health,  
[Instructor Names]

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**Resources.** Adding the resources discussed in class and from the workbook here, so that the links are clickable and easier to access:

**[NOTE: Be sure to add any additional resources that came up in class.]**

**Harvard Sleep Disorders Screening Survey** – online survey to help determine if an individual's symptoms are consistent with a sleep disorder:

<https://sleep.hms.harvard.edu/education-training/public-education/sleep-and-health-education-program/sleep-health-education-52>

**Sleep Phases and Stages** – educational article:  
<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/sleep/stages-of-sleep>

**Stanford LUNA Study** – sleep study and treatment for anyone ages 50-90 that is experiencing memory problems, emotional distress (ex: anxiety, depression, irritability), and sleep difficulty:  
[https://med.stanford.edu/copsynsleeplab/Participate2.html#luna\\_study](https://med.stanford.edu/copsynsleeplab/Participate2.html#luna_study)

**UCSF Osher Sleep Center Study** – sleep study and treatment for anyone with trouble sleeping: <https://www.sealab.ucsf.edu/oshercentersleep>

**Sleep Diary** – a fillable page for individuals to record nightly sleep-related information:  
[https://www.sleepfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/SleepFoundation\\_SleepDiary.pdf](https://www.sleepfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/SleepFoundation_SleepDiary.pdf)

**Sleep Log** – a page for individuals to record nightly sleep-related information:  
[https://www.sleepfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/SleepFoundation\\_SleepLog.pdf](https://www.sleepfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/SleepFoundation_SleepLog.pdf)

**ACL Disclaimer:** This project was supported, in part by grant number 990INNU0023, from the Administration for Community Living, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects with government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official ACL policy.

# Wellness Class 6: Preventing Falls

## Lesson Plans

## Wellness Class 6: Preventing Falls

**Estimated Time Required:** 75 minutes

**Participant Workbook Section:** Preventing Falls

**Class Overview:** Too frequently, older adults are not aware of how common and detrimental a fall can be, until it happens to them. This class aims to increase awareness and highlight how we can implement safety measures to mitigate the risk of falls so that life can be enjoyed, without a fear of falling. For those that are interested and able, class concludes with some exercises that will help build strength, flexibility and balance.

### Learning Objectives

After completing this class, participants will be able to:

1. Recognize how frequently falls occur and the impacts falls can have on health.
2. Self-assess personal risk for falls.
3. Identify steps they can take to prevent falls.
4. Name what to do if a fall occurs.
5. Practice balance, stretching, and strengthening exercises on their own.

### Class Outline

- Welcome and Mindful Moment 10 min
  - *Engage in peer support*
  - *Build skill*
- Activity: Falls Risk Self-Assessment 10 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Engage in peer support*
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
- Reduce Your Risk 35 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Engage in peer support*
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
- Flexibility and Balance Practice 15 min
  - *Build skill*
  - *Engage in peer support*
  - *Identify resources*
- Closing and At-Home Activity 5 min
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
  - *Identify resources*

## Suggested Discussion Topics and Tips

Facilitators can utilize Breakout Rooms for increased personal social engagement. Suggested topics for this class:

- **Suggested breakout room questions:**
  - How can you make your home safer to help prevent falls?
- **Suggested discussion prompts throughout class:**
  - Do the results from your Falls Risk Assessment surprise you? (Slide 29)
  - Do the indicators in the Falls Risk Assessment surprise you? (Slide 29)
  - What are two things you can do to prevent falls in your home? (Slide 43)
  - Have you fallen in recent years? What did you do at the moment? How did it impact you? (Slide 58)

## Sample Follow-Up Email

Hello!

**Thank you** for attending today's Project Age Well class on **Falls Prevention!**  
[Resources listed at very end of e-mail].

**Class feedback.** Kindly **click this link** [insert link to survey] to complete the ***anonymous*** class feedback survey. Your feedback guides us to ensure we are discussing relevant content in a way that makes sense.

**Facebook group.** If you'd like to join our private Facebook group to connect further with participants past and present, please search for us at "**Project Age Well**" [insert link to Facebook group].

## **Class takeaways**

- Preventing falls does not mean you must live a boring life and avoid everything you enjoy! Preventing falls involves incorporating fall risk safety measures into your life and trusting that those measures will do their job to protect you.
- To determine if you are at risk of falling, ask your doctor to conduct a Falls Risk Assessment with you or start with this brief, free, online [Falls Checkup](#).
- If you determine that you are at risk of falling, prevention strategies include:
  - Reviewing your entire list of medications and supplements with your doctor to determine if any interactions or side effects may increase your risk of falling.
  - Getting your vision and hearing checked regularly and managing any problems promptly.
  - Using the assistive devices recommended to you. They were recommended for a reason and can help keep you safe!

- Keeping your home safe by keeping your space clean and dry.
- Building strength, balance, coordination and flexibility to decrease your risk of falling and make recovery quicker if you do fall.
- Despite even the most careful preparation, falls can still happen. In the event of a fall, you should:
  - Check for injury and seek medical attention immediately if you think you hit your head.
  - Check the location for safety hazards and make changes to correct them as soon as possible.
  - Recount the incident to your doctor and review the cause to see if it is something you can change.

**Next class.** We are looking forward to seeing you again next week for our class on **[day of the week] [date] at [time]** for our discussion on **[class topic]**!

In good health,  
[Instructor Names]

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**Resources.** Adding the resources discussed in class and from the workbook here, so that the links are clickable and easier to access:

**[NOTE: Be sure to add any additional resources that came up in class.]**

**Falls Risk Self-Assessment** – online tool to help you gauge your risk of falling:  
<https://www.ncoa.org/article/falls-free-checkup>

**Morelifehealth.com** – website with various pre-recorded videos, designed for older adults and led by a physiotherapist: [morelifehealth.com](http://morelifehealth.com)

**Falls Prevention Awareness in Public Transportation**, National Council on Aging:  
<https://www.ncoa.org/article/falls-prevention-public-transportation>

**Falls Prevention Guide for Caregivers**, National Council on Aging:  
<https://www.ncoa.org/article/falls-prevention-conversation-guide-for-caregivers>

**18 Steps to Fall Proofing Your Home**, National Council on Aging:  
<https://www.ncoa.org/article/18-steps-to-fall-proofing-your-home>

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# Wellness Class 7: Maintaining Mobility

## Lesson Plans

## Wellness Class 7: Maintaining Mobility

**Estimated Time Required:** 75 minutes

**Participant Workbook Section:** Maintaining Mobility

**Class Overview:** This class highlights how regular physical activity can increase longevity, reduce the burden of chronic disease and is overall one of the best things that we can do to improve our health. Participants walk through the steps to develop a healthy habit related to physical activity, reflecting on concepts they covered in Class One. At the end of class, participants have the option to participate in some light movement together, with seated and standing options available.

### Learning Objectives

After completing this class, participants will be able to:

1. Articulate the immediate and long-term benefits of physical activity.
2. Understand the different recommendations for both the types of physical activity and quantity for each type of physical activity.
3. Identify what types of physical activity they enjoy.
4. Create a plan for incorporating more physical activity into their lives.
5. Identify the potential challenges to incorporating more physical activity into their lives and brainstorm possible solutions to those challenges.
6. Practice seated or standing strengthening and cardiovascular exercises on their own.

### Class Outline

- Welcome and Mindful Moment 10 min
  - *Engage in peer support*
  - *Build skill*
- The Health Benefits of Physical Activity 5 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
- Incorporating Physical Activity Recommendations into our Lives 15 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Build skill*
  - *Engage in peer support*
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behavior*
- Exercising Together 40 min
  - *Gain knowledge*



- *Build skill*
- *Engage in peer support*
- Closing and At-Home Activity 5 min
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
  - *Identify resources*

## Suggested Discussion Topics and Tips

Facilitators can utilize Breakout Rooms for increased personal social engagement. Suggested topics for this class:

- **Suggested breakout room questions:**
  - What is your “why” or your motivation for maintaining your mobility? (Slide 41)
  - What prevents you from getting enough physical activity? What solutions could address these challenges? (Slide 47)
- **Suggested discussion prompts throughout class:**
  - How do you enjoy getting physical activity? (Slide 45)
  - Do the expectations that you set for maintaining your mobility seem specific and realistic to implement into your daily life? Consider what your last week or month was like. (Slide 49)

## Sample Follow-Up Email

Hello!

**Thank you** for attending today’s Project Age Well class on **Maintaining Mobility!** [Resources listed at very end of e-mail].

**Class feedback.** Kindly **click this link** [insert link to survey] to complete the ***anonymous*** class feedback survey. Your feedback guides us to ensure we are discussing relevant content in a way that makes sense.

**Facebook group.** If you’d like to join our private Facebook group to connect further with participants past and present, please search for us at **“Project Age Well”** [insert link to Facebook group].

### **Class takeaways.**

- To maintain mobility and health, it is important to get the following types of physical activity: cardiovascular/aerobic, muscle-strengthening, flexibility, balance.
- The American College of Sports Medicine and American Heart Association and other experts recommend that each week, adults get:
  - 150 minutes (about 2 and a half hours) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity OR 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity
  - 2 days of muscle-strengthening activity
  - 10 minutes, 2 days per week of balance exercises
- Short-term benefits of physical activity include: improved sleep quality, lower blood pressure, less anxiety, improved mood, and increased energy.
- Long-term benefits of physical activity include: reduced risk of developing dementia and other mental health disorders, better bone health, better balance and coordination, reduced risk of weight gain, improved heart health, reduced risk of cancer, diabetes, pre-diabetes, and other chronic conditions.
- Getting enough physical activity can be challenging due to many different barriers, such as lack of motivation, mobility issues, competing priorities, and different cultural preferences. Identifying what prevents us from getting enough physical activity can help us find solutions to getting past those barriers.
- When creating a physical activity plan for yourself, consider the following:
  - What is your motivation or your “why”?
  - How do you enjoy getting physical activity?
  - What barriers prevent you from getting enough physical activity? What can you do to work past those barriers and ensure that you get enough physical activity?
  - What are realistic goals for you and your lifestyle?
  - Are there certain days of the week or times of day that you prefer to do your physical activity?

**Next class.** We are looking forward to seeing you again next week for our class on **[day of the week] [date] at [time]** for our discussion on **[class topic]**!

In good health,  
[Instructor Names]

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**Resources.** Adding the resources discussed in class and from the workbook here, so that the links are clickable and easier to access:

**[NOTE: Be sure to add any additional resources that came up in class.]**

**Seniors Mobility** – website with various exercise images and descriptions, designed for older adults: [seniorsmobility.org](http://seniorsmobility.org)

**More Life Health** – website with various pre-recorded videos, designed for older adults and led by a physiotherapist: [morelifehealth.com](http://morelifehealth.com)

**Physical Activity Guidelines for Older Adults**, American Family Physician:  
<https://www.aafp.org/pubs/afp/issues/2010/0101/p55.html>

**Physical activity and public health in older adults**, American College of Sports Medicine and the American Heart Association:  
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17762378/>

**Staying Motivated to Exercise** – tips for Older Adults, National Institute on Aging:  
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/staying-motivated-exercise-tips-older-adults>

**Exercising with Chronic Conditions**, National Institute on Aging:  
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/exercising-chronic-conditions>

**Exercise and Physical Activity Tracking Tools**, National Institute on Aging:  
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/exercise-and-physical-activity-tracking-tools>

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# **Wellness Class 8: Taking Charge of Your Health Care Lesson Plans**

## Wellness Class 8: Taking Charge of Your Health Care

**Estimated Time Required:** 75 minutes

**Participant Workbook Section:** Health Care

**Class Overview:** This class encourages individuals to seek medical care for both the prevention and treatment of acute and chronic health conditions. Participants learn about tips and resources to get health care coverage and make the most of coverage, once acquired. Peer to peer connection and learning opportunities focus on navigating the health care system as an older adult.

### Learning Objectives

After completing this class, participants will be able to:

1. Name several benefits of preventive care and what is typically covered by insurance providers.
2. Understand how to find out what preventive care is recommended for them and how to find out what is covered by their insurance provider.
3. Identify their own challenges to seeking medical coverage and brainstorm possible solutions.
4. Articulate what they are looking for in a medical provider and understand how to find them.
5. Understand what actions they can take to make the most of their medical appointments.
6. Use tools for documenting changes to their health.
7. Reflect on their satisfaction with the health care services they currently receive and determine if there is anything that needs attention.

### Class Outline

- Welcome and Mindful Moment 10 min
  - *Engage in peer support*
  - *Build skill*
- Preventive care: why, what types and how to access it 15 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Identify resources*
- Challenges and solutions to navigating health care 15 min
  - *Engage in peer support*
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*

- Making the most of your medical appointments 30 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
  - *Identify resources*
  - *Engage in peer support*
  
- Closing and At-Home Activity 5 min
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
  - *Identify resources*

### **Suggested Discussion Topics and Tips**

Facilitators can utilize Breakout Rooms for increased personal social engagement. Suggested topics for this class:

- **Suggested breakout room questions:**
  - Do you see a medical provider as often as you believe you should? (Slide 22)
    - Why or why not?
    - If not, what would make it easier to see a medical provider?
  - What are some of the things you look for in a doctor? (Slide 29)
    - Do you feel comfortable talking openly and honestly with your doctor?
    - Why or why not?
  
- **Suggested discussion prompts throughout class:**
  - In the last year, have you delayed or avoided any medical care? (Slide 13)
  - If you delayed or avoided any medical care in the last year, have you now visited your provider to get that care? (Slide 16)
  - Have you tried searching for a medical provider online? (Slide 28)
    - What was your experience?
  - Have you tried different methods of communication with your doctor? (Slide 34)
    - Why or why not?
    - What was your experience?
  - What can you do at your next medical visit to ensure that you make the most of your appointment? (Slide 40)

## Sample Follow-Up Email

Hello!

**Thank you** for attending today's Project Age Well class on **Taking Charge of Your Health Care!** [Resources listed at very end of e-mail].

**Class feedback.** Kindly **click this link** [insert link to survey] to complete the **anonymous** class feedback survey. Your feedback guides us to ensure we are discussing relevant content in a way that makes sense.

**Facebook group.** If you'd like to join our private Facebook group to connect further with participants past and present, please search for us at "**Project Age Well**" [insert link to Facebook group].

### **Class takeaways**

- Delaying or avoiding medical care is common and happens for a variety of reasons. In fact, an estimated 40.9% of U.S. adults have delayed or avoided medical care during the pandemic because of concerns about COVID-19.
- Delayed or avoided medical care could:
  - Increase suffering from a disease or medical condition
  - Increase the chance of death from both chronic and acute health conditions.
- Preventive care helps detect or prevent serious diseases and medical problems before they become major. Preventive care services include things like blood pressure screenings, bone density tests, mammograms, colonoscopies, and vaccines.
- Most medical insurance plans cover preventive services at no cost to the patient.
- The recommended preventive care services vary depending on your age, gender, and other medical conditions. To see which preventive services are recommended for you, consult with your doctor or input your basic information at <https://health.gov/myhealthfinder>.
- Your medical conditions can have a significant impact on your day-to-day life, so it is important that you leave your appointments with all your concerns addressed and a thorough understanding of your doctor's instructions.
- Strategies for making the most of your medical appointments include:
  - Finding the right doctor for you
  - Exploring different methods of communication
  - Going to appointments prepared
  - Communicating openly and honestly
  - Asking questions
  - Listening actively
  - Remembering that your doctor might not know everything

**Next class.** We are looking forward to seeing you again next week for our class on **[day of the week] [date] at [time]** for our discussion on **[class topic]**!

In good health,  
[Instructor Names]

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**Resources.** Adding the resources discussed in class and from the workbook here, so that the links are clickable and easier to access:

**[NOTE: Be sure to add any additional resources that came up in class.]**

**My Health Finder** – online tool that helps ensure you and your family are up to date on your preventive services: <https://health.gov/myhealthfinder>

**AgeWell Planner** – online tool to help older adults age with confidence by providing personalized resources, tools, and expert help: <https://ncoa.org/age-well-planner>

**Talking with your Doctor: A Guide for Older Adults** – worksheets to complete and take to medical appointments: <https://order.nia.nih.gov/sites/default/files/2021-06/talking-with-your-doctor.pdf>

**Medi-Cal** – health insurance for low-income California residents that are 65+ or have a disability: 1-800-786-4346; [https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/medi-cal/eligibility/Pages/MC\\_Eligibility\\_Ben.aspx](https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/medi-cal/eligibility/Pages/MC_Eligibility_Ben.aspx)

**Medicare** – health insurance for those over 65: 1-800-772-1213; <https://www.medicare.gov/>

**HICAP** – CA Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program: 1-800-434-0222; <https://www.shiphelp.org/about-medicare/regional-ship-location/california>

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# Nutrition Class 1: Eating Well 101

## Lesson Plans

## Nutrition Class 1: Eating Well 101

**Estimated Time Required:** 75 minutes

**Participant Workbook Section:** Eating Well 101

*“Eat real food. Not too much. Mostly plants.” - Michael Pollan, *In Defense of Food**

**Class Overview:** The basic tenants of the Eating Well 101 class are advocating for eating whole, real foods most of the time, being able to distinguish those from processed foods, and building a balanced plate for most meals and snacks. The intention for this class is to relay that our goal in Project Age Well nutrition classes is to simplify the tenants of what it means to eat healthfully – to bring healthy eating back to common sense and what we instinctively know: eat whole, real food that makes us feel good and supports our health.

### Learning Objectives

After completing this class, participants will be able to:

1. Articulate 1 to 2 principles that guide them individually in what healthy eating means to them.
2. Identify the five components of a Balanced Plate.
3. Describe one way in which each food category in a Balanced Plate promotes health.
4. Determine how to prepare/modify meals to resemble a Balanced Plate of a variety of real foods.
5. State a goal for eating a Balanced Plate of real food.
6. Implement at least one strategy to help increase the balance and variety of real foods they are eating.

### Class Outline

- Welcome and Quick Connect 25 min
  - *Engage in peer support*
- What eating well means to each of us 10 min
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
- Key principles for eating well 35 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Build skills*
- Closing and At-Home Activity 5 min
  - *Build skills*
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*

- *Identify resources*

## **Suggested Discussion Topics and Tips**

Facilitators can utilize Breakout Rooms for increased personal social engagement.

- **Suggested breakout room question:**

- What makes you unique? [A primer for how our eating choices is highly individual and unique!] (Slide 8)

- **Suggested discussion prompts throughout class:**

- Welcome and Quick Connect, further anchoring for the class
  - The myth about progress: What may have taken place at each of these inflection points? Does anyone resonate with this or have an example? (Slide 11 & Slide 12)
- What eating well means to each of us
  - Why is eating well important to you? What does food and nutrition mean to your health? (Slide 20)
  - Has anyone had experience with food and health? (Slide 22)
  - What messages have you heard or been taught about eating well in your life? What do you do on a regular basis that works well for you regarding food intake? What is on your mind as you age? (Slide 32)
  - What is not on the ingredient list? (Slide 41)
- Key principles for eating well
  - What does “organic” mean? (Slide 61)
  - Does anyone know what whole wheat or whole grain means? (Slide 65)
  - What is a good alternative for electrolyte replacement? (Slide 70)
  - What would be an alternative yogurt that is not processed? (Slide 83)
  - Once we look at these ingredients, does this product still live up to the product claims on the front of the packaging? Do nutritional facts seem as important? (Slide 100)
  - What do you think should constitute a typical meal? Why do you think these types of foods are part of a typical meal? (Slide 105)
  - Food Guides: Which of these have you seen before? What stands out? What do all of these have in common? (Slide 107)
  - What do we mean by “non-starchy” vegetables (Slide 109)
  - What are some of the reasons we always hear “eat your

- vegetables!”? (Slide 110)
- What do we mean by complex carbohydrates? What do we mean by starchy vegetables? (Slide 112)
  - What have you heard about protein needs and diet? Which of these foods are surprising? (Slide 117)
  - Can you name the various components of the balanced plate in this meal? (Slide 124-126)
  - How balanced is this meal? How would you modify it, if at all? (Slide 127)
  - What is the difference between “balance” and “variety”? Why is variety important? How do you feel about the variety in your eating patterns? (Slide 132)
  - What do you notice about the following meals? (Slide 137-140)

### Sample Follow-Up Email

Hello!

**Thank you** for attending today’s Project Age Well class on **Eating Well 101!**  
[Resources listed at very end of e-mail].

**Class feedback.** Kindly **click this link** [insert link to survey] to complete the **anonymous** class feedback survey. Your feedback guides us to ensure we are discussing relevant content in a way that makes sense.

**Facebook group.** If you’d like to join our private Facebook group to connect further with participants past and present, please search for us at “**Project Age Well**” [insert link to Facebook group].

**Class takeaways.** As mentioned, I like to bring back common sense and intuition when it comes to *what to eat* and *how much to eat*! Getting back to the basics:

**Choose real, whole foods when possible.** Choose minimally processed foods that came from the ground (plants) or are animal foods. When choosing food products/ processed foods, choose ones with simpler ingredients, when possible.

**Fill your plate with vegetables, protein, healthy fats, and starch.** More vegetables are always a good thing! Pay attention to what proportion of these items makes you feel personally satisfied. When you strike the right balance for you, you may find that you feel more satisfied, energized, with a better outlook, and that cravings naturally lessen!

**Be gracious with yourself.** As I touched on briefly, be gracious with yourselves. We have been bombarded with a lot of conflicting nutrition information and embedded in a pervasive diet culture for several generations. Lean into your own personal wisdom and intuitions about your eating habits. Keep the guiding two core principles above in mind,

and remember, even moderation in moderation!

**Put it into action!** Finally, if you have the energy and time, try building your own balanced plate this week. Send me a picture of your plate via e-mail: [e-mail address] or via text: [work cell]!

**Next class.** We are looking forward to seeing you again next week for our class on **[day of the week] [date] at [time]** for our discussion on **[class topic]**!

In good health,  
[Instructor Names]

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**Resources.** Adding the resources discussed in class and from the workbook here, so that the links are clickable and easier to access:

**[NOTE: Be sure to add any additional resources that came up in class.]**

**Peter Menzel Photography** – Want to see more about how we eat around the world? Check out Peter Menzel's amazing body of work: <https://www.menzelphoto.com/index>

**The Healthy Eating Plate** – A guide for a balanced, nutrient-rich plate from the Harvard School of Public Health: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/healthy-eating-plate/>

**The Harvard Nutrition Source** – An evidence-based resource for a variety of nutrition topics: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/>

**Myplate.gov Recipe Finder** – Includes filters for type of cuisine, specific nutrients of interest (e.g., reduced sodium) and meal: <https://www.myplate.gov/myplate-kitchen/recipes>

**American Diabetes Association** – Guidance for managing diabetes, including recipes for a balanced plate: <https://www.diabetes.org/healthy-living/recipes-nutrition/eating-well>

**National Kidney Foundation** – Recipes are searchable by stage of CKD, dietary preferences (ex., dairy-free, vegetarian) and meal type: <https://www.kidney.org/recipes-search>

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# Nutrition Class 2: Variety of Fruit and Vegetables Lesson Plans

## Nutrition Class 2: Variety of Fruit and Vegetables

**Estimated Time Required:** 75 minutes

**Participant Workbook Section:** Variety of Fruits and Vegetables

**Class Overview:** This class underscores not only the importance of incorporating more vegetables and fruits into daily life, but *how to* achieve eating more vegetables and fruits. We believe that most people already know that eating more vegetables and fruits is important; thus, this class is to focus on how to make eating more of them a reality! Finally, this class wraps up by featuring a recipe that highlights a great way to add more vegetables to an easy dish.

### Learning Objectives

After completing this class, participants will be able to:

1. Identify at least two benefits of eating five servings of colorful vegetables regularly as a part of a healthy eating pattern.
2. State a goal for intake of colorful vegetables as related to current intake.
3. Implement at least one strategy to overcome barriers and help increase the amount and / or variety of vegetable intake.

### Class Outline

- Welcome and connect 25 min
  - *Engage in peer support*
- Why colorful fruit and veggies are important for health 15 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
- Strategies for increasing intake and variety of veggies 20 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Build skills*
- Closing and At-Home Activity 5 min
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
  - *Identify resources*
- Kitchen Inspiration: Switch-It-Up Stir Fry 10 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Build skills*

## Suggested Discussion Topics and Tips

Facilitators can utilize Breakout Rooms for increased personal social engagement.

- **Suggested breakout room questions:**
  - What is your favorite vegetable or fruit, or the one you eat most frequently? (Slide 13-15)
  - Is there a vegetable dish from your culture you like to cook? (Slide 13-15)
  
- **Suggested discussion prompts throughout class:**
  - Welcome and Quick Connect, further anchoring for the class
    - Potatoes & Tomatoes Most Eaten Vegetables in United States: What is your reaction to this? What is your experience with accessing / using a variety of fruits & vegetables? (Slide 17)
    - With a balanced plate in mind, how many servings of vegetables would you say you typically eat each day? (Slide 23)
    - Non-Starchy Vegetables: Which of these have you never heard of? Never tried? (Slide 25)
  
  - Why colorful fruit and veggies are important for health
    - Why do you think eating more vegetables and fruits matters? (Slide 27)
    - How might we add colorful vegetables to these common dishes? (Slide 35-39)
    - What do you do to make sure you are hydrated? (Slide 47-48)
  
  - Strategies for increasing intake and variety of veggies
    - Which of these vegetables are you drawn to first? Why? What experience do you have with it? (Slide 60)
    - What is one vegetable here that you have questions about or would like to try? (Slide 60)
    - How many servings of vegetables are on this plate now? What could we shift to add more vegetables? (Slide 63- 66)
    - Could you invest in a tool to make vegetable preparation tastier? Easier? Easier to clean up? (Slide 90)
    - How can you add vegetables to your day? (Slide 100)
    - What sites do you use, if any, for recipe inspiration? (Slide 102)



## Sample Follow-Up Email

Hello!

**Thank you** for attending today's Project Age Well class on **Variety of Vegetables & Fruits!** It was such a fun and lively discussion. [Resources listed at very end of e-mail].

**Class feedback.** Kindly **click this link** [insert link to survey] to complete the **anonymous** class feedback survey. Your feedback guides us to ensure we are discussing relevant content in a way that makes sense.

**Facebook group.** If you'd like to join our private Facebook group to connect further with participants past and present, please search for us at "**Project Age Well**" [insert link to Facebook group].

### **Class takeaways:**

**Vegetables & fruit are essential for our health.** *Why?* Not only do they add variety, flavor, and texture, but they are also a source of fiber (prebiotics!), vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and hydration!

### **Eating more vegetables & fruit is always a good thing! *How to?***

Make a vegetable-based frittata.

Pre chop cabbage for the week and keep it on hand to add to the bottom of soups, or to make the base of a salad.

Prepare a vegetable and bean-based soup.

Make a vegetable stir-fry with brown rice and fried eggs.

Eat half an avocado or grab a piece of fruit for an easy snack.

**Next class.** We are looking forward to seeing you again next week for our class on **[day of the week] [date] at [time]** for our discussion on **[class topic]**!

In good health,  
[Instructor Names]

---

**Resources.** Here are some additional resources that came up in class as well as those listed in the workbook on Page [XX]:

**[NOTE: Be sure to add any additional resources that came up in class.]**

**New vegetables:** [Nopales](#), pictured below. Try them with scrambled eggs for a change!



**101 Cookbooks:** The link below leads to the section of the site that lists recipes by ingredient. Looking for a new way to spice things up? Search here:  
<https://www.101cookbooks.com/ingredient.html>

**Environmental Working Group:** Their Clean Fifteen and Dirty Dozen produce lists:  
<https://www.ewg.org/foodnews/clean-fifteen.php>

**Sources of Resistant Starch:** Want to learn more?  
<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/9-foods-high-in-resistant-starch#9.-Other-cooked-and-cooled-starchy-carbs>

**Add Color:** How to Eat More Fruit and Vegetables (American Heart Association)  
<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/add-color>

**Antioxidants:** In Depth (National Center for Complimentary and Integrative Care)  
<https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/antioxidants-in-depth>

**Fact Sheets for Vitamins, Minerals and More:** (Office of Dietary Supplements, National Institutes of Health) – View the amount recommended, food sources and evidence <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/list-all/>

**Eatfresh.org:** Use the search tool to find recipes that use any fruit and vegetables that you have on hand <https://eatfresh.org/find-a-recipe>

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**Nutrition Class 3: Meal Timing and Portions  
Lesson Plans**

## Nutrition Class 3: Meal Timing and Portions

**Estimated Time Required:** 75 minutes

**Participant Workbook Section:** Meal Timing and Portions

**Class Overview:** The first part of this class covers the importance of paying attention to *when* we eat, especially at what time we break our fast (eat the first meal of the day) and how much time passes between meals. The second part of this class focuses on what proportions of each food group we are eating at every meal or snack, ideally following the Balanced Plate method. Discussion focuses especially on ensuring *enough* of each of the food groups – enough vegetables, healthy fats, proteins, etc. – and tuning into what proportions of each food group make us feel satisfied. Finally, we end class with an introduction to the Physical Hunger Scale, which reconnects us with our personal cues for hunger and fullness.

### Learning Objectives

After completing this class, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the basic concepts of meal timing.
2. Identify how the timing of meals affects one's health and eating patterns in general.
3. Self-assess meal timing based on a food log.
4. Identify what proportions of each food group that support health and lead to personal satisfaction.
5. Self-assess what foods are currently eaten in adequate portions, what could be increased, and what could be decreased.
6. Utilize the power of pausing before making decisions and the physical hunger scale to support mindful food intake.
7. Implement one change in terms of meal timing, food proportions at any given meal, or portion sizes of a certain food item.

### Class Outline

- Welcome and Connect: Class Recap and Icebreaker 25 min
  - *Engage in peer support*
- What's on Your Plate: Food Intake Activity health 5 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
  - *Build skills*
- Meal Timing Matters 15 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*

- Portion Awareness 15 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
  
- Physical Hunger Scale 10 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
  - *Build skills*
  
- Closing and At-Home Activity 5 min
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
  - *Build skills*
  - *Identify resources*

### **Suggested Discussion Topics and Tips**

**Discussion Topics.** Facilitators can utilize Breakout Rooms for increased personal social engagement.

- **Suggested breakout room questions:**
  - How often do you usually eat in a typical day? (Slide 17)
  - What is usually your biggest meal of the day? Why? (Slide 17)
  
- **Suggested discussion prompts throughout class:**
  - Welcome and Quick Connect, further anchoring for the class
    - What are participants taking away from classes thus far? What is “sticking” from class material? (Slide 8)
  
  - Meal Timing Matters and Portion Awareness
    - Who remembers the balanced plate? What are the components of a balanced plate? (Slide 24)
    - How do you determine how much to eat at a given time? What does your body feel like when you \*just start\* to feel satisfied? When you \*just start\* to feel hungry? (Slide 2)
    - How much time passes between your meals? How do you feel about this? Are you eating breakfast? When do you lack energy? What affects your meal timing? (Slide 40)
    - Would adjusting your meal timing support your health? (Slide 41)

**Tips.** When introducing the “Yesterday’s Foods & Drinks” food log, please emphasize that this activity is for individual use only. It is not intended to bring any judgement, rather only a level of awareness that we will be able to use to identify strengths/areas that are going well as well as areas that could possibly use improvement.

## **Sample Follow-Up Email**

**Hello!**

**Thank you** for attending today’s Project Age Well class on **Meal Timing & Portions!** [Resources discussed in class as well as those in the workbook are listed at the very end of this e-mail].

**Class feedback.** Kindly **click this link** [insert link to survey] to complete the ***anonymous*** class feedback survey. Your feedback guides us to ensure we are discussing relevant content in a way that makes sense.

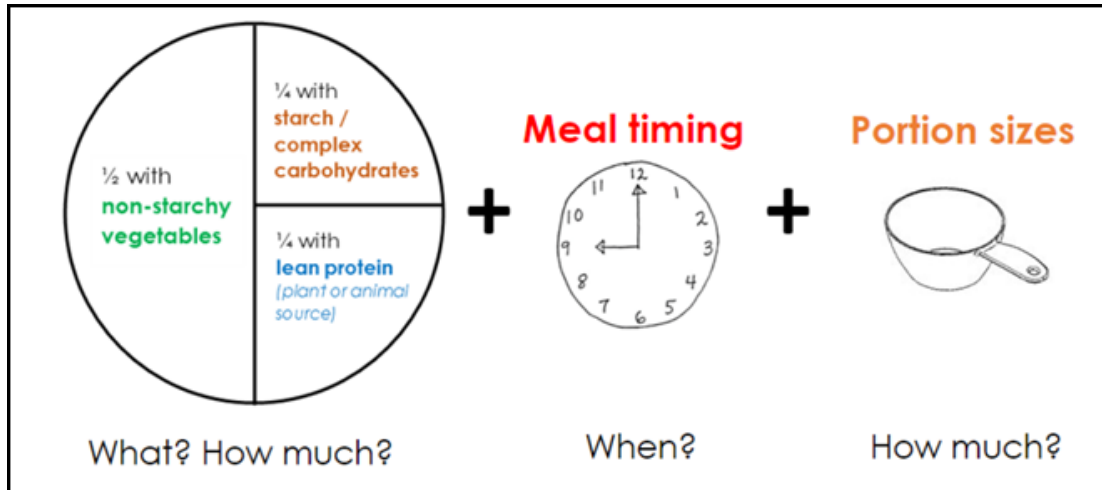
**Facebook group.** If you’d like to join our private Facebook group to connect further with participants past and present, please search for us at “**Project Age Well**” [insert link to Facebook group].

### **Quick class takeaways:**

**Meal timing.** Pay attention to when you are breaking your fast (that is, what time you are eating your first meal and how long after waking up!) as well as how much time passes between meals. Ideally, you want to aim to eat your first meal within 1-2 hours of waking up and aim for 3-4 hours between meals.

**Portion sizes.** Tune into what foods you are eating enough of and what foods you would like to be more mindful to limit.

**Balanced plate.** Bring awareness to what is going into each meal and snack. Are you including enough whole foods, including vegetables, healthy fats, proteins, starch? What proportion of each helps you feel satisfied?



**Next class.** We are looking forward to seeing you again next week for our class on **[day of the week] [date] at [time]** for our discussion on **[class topic]**!

In good health,  
[Instructor Names]

**Resources.** Finally, passing along the resources listed in workbook, so that you have a clickable link:

**[NOTE: Be sure to add any additional resources that came up in class.]**

**Dr. Aviva Romm's Time-Based Eating reading and /or On Health podcast:**  
<https://avivaromm.com/intermittent-fasting/>

**Type 2 Diabetes** (Diabetes Education Online, UCSF Diabetes Teaching Center)  
<https://dte.ucsf.edu/types-of-diabetes/type2/>

**The Big Picture: Checking Your Blood Glucose** (American Diabetes Association)  
<https://diabetes.org/healthy-living/medication-treatments/blood-glucose-testing-and-control/checking-your-blood-sugar>

**Diabetes Meal Planning** (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)  
<https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/eat-well/meal-plan-method.html>

**Fruits and Vegetables Serving Sizes Infographic** (American Heart Association)  
<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/add-color/fruits-and-vegetables-serving-sizes>

**The Hunger Rating Scale** (American Diabetes Association):  
<https://diabetes.org/healthy-living/weight-loss/emotions-and-eating/get-touch-your-appetite>

**Just Eat It – Hunger body Scan** (Laura Thomas, PhD, adapted from Evelyn Tribole, MS RDN and Elyse Resch, MS RDN) <https://soundcloud.com/pan-macmillan/just-eat-it-hunger-body-scan>

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# Nutrition Class 4: Quality and Food Labels

## Lesson Plans

## Nutrition Class 4: Quality and Food Labels

**Estimated Time Required:** 75 minutes

**Participant Workbook Section:** Quality and Food Labels

**Class Overview:** This class focuses on what quality means in terms of each of the macronutrients – carbohydrates, proteins, and fats – as well as how eating quality foods affects one’s health. We recognize that many different things can define quality when it comes to food! For the purposes of this class, we focus on quality in terms of nutritious quality. Nutritious quality refers to eating foods that are high in nutrients relative to how much energy these foods have. We emphasize that if participants are able to eat mostly whole, real foods, they will likely be eating quality foods. This class also teaches what to look for on food packages when buying food products to opt for higher quality when possible. Participants discuss the ingredients list, the suggested serving size, and percent daily value for certain nutrients. Finally, this class wraps up featuring an easy recipe that features quality, whole foods.

### Learning Objectives

After completing this class, participants will be able to:

1. Describe one way in which nutrient-dense, minimally processed foods support health.
2. Differentiate between complex and simple carbohydrates.
3. Understand the benefits of eating a mix of both animal and plant sources of protein.
4. Identify healthful sources of fat.
5. Assess the quality of packaged, processed food using tools available on food packages.
6. Implement at least one strategy to bring nutrient-dense, quality sources of carbohydrates, protein, and fat to the eating routine.

### Class Outline

- Welcome and Connect: Icebreaker 20 min
  - *Engage in peer support*
- What defines quality food? Discussion & Meal Log Activity 10 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
  - *Build skills*
- Quality in carbohydrates, protein, and fat sources 25 min
  - *Gain knowledge*

- Know the facts: Understanding food labels 10 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Build skills*
  
- Closing and At-Home Activity 5 min
  - *Build skills*
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
  - *Identify resources*
  
- Kitchen Inspiration: Nigerian Bean and Cabbage Stew 5 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Build skills*

### **Suggested Discussion Topics and Tips**

**Discussion Topics.** Facilitators can utilize Breakout Rooms for increased personal social engagement.

- **Suggested breakout room questions:**
  - What is one piece of advice you give or have received? (Slide 8)
  - Add breakout room for slide 48?
  
- **Suggested discussion prompts throughout class:**
  - What defines quality food? Discussion & Meal Log Activity
    - What do you notice about your patterns of intake? Anything interesting? (Slide 20)
    - What defines “quality” in food to you? (Slide 22)
    - More nutrients versus fewer nutrients: What other examples come to mind? (Slide 31)
    - What diseases have you heard that are associated with chronic inflammation? (Slide 34)
    - What other factors, in addition to food, can help reduce inflammation? (Slide 41)
  
  - Quality in carbohydrates
    - What are some carbohydrate foods? What would be a healthy option for a carbohydrate food? How do we know what makes a healthy carbohydrate food? (Slide 49)
    - Complex carbohydrates: Does anyone eat some of the food regularly? See one that they would add to their day? (Slide 53)
    - Check your carbohydrates: Which of these may be less obvious?

- (Slide 54 & Slide 55)
  - Jacqueline's eating: Which foods are carbohydrate foods? What questions do you have about these foods and how do they relate to Jacqueline's concerns? Which foods are highly processed? How can I learn more about the contents of processed foods? (Slide 62-63)
- o Quality in protein
  - What do we mean by "quality" protein? (Slide 65)
  - What have you heard about protein needs and eating? Which of these foods are surprising? (Slide 67)
  - What do we mean by "lean" protein? (Slide 68)
- o Know the facts: Understanding food labels
  - How do you make decisions about packaged foods you eat? (Slide 81 & Slide 82)
  - Which other foods do you see or eat/drink that you believe may include added sugars? (Slide 100)
  - What could be another option for electrolyte replacement? (Slide 100)

**Tips.** When introducing the "Yesterday's Foods & Drinks" food log, please emphasize that this activity is for individual use only. It is not intended to bring any judgment, rather only a level of awareness that we will be able to use to identify strengths / areas that are going well as well as areas that could possibly use improvement.

### **Sample Follow-Up Email**

Hello!

**Thank you** for attending today's Project Age Well class on **Quality & Food Labels!** It was wonderful hearing about the different pieces of advice! [Resources listed at very end of e-mail!]

**Class feedback.** Kindly **click this link** [insert link to survey] to complete the **anonymous** class feedback survey. Your feedback guides us to ensure we are discussing relevant content in a way that makes sense.

**Facebook group.** If you'd like to join our private Facebook group to connect further with participants past and present, please search for us at "**Project Age Well**" [insert link to Facebook group].

**Class key takeaways:**

**What are high quality foods?** Quality foods are found in whole, real, minimally processed foods, such as vegetables, fruits, beans, nuts, seeds, whole grains, fish, meat, eggs, olive oil, etc. Quality foods tend to be nutrient dense, meaning every bite is packed with minerals, vitamins, fiber, and more!

**Why are quality foods important?** Quality foods tend to be anti-inflammatory and slow down the processes of aging in the body.

**Quality fats.** During class I mentioned the importance of paying special attention to the quality of fat, opting for fat sources that offer unsaturated fats – especially omega polyunsaturated fats. This includes olive oil, avocado, nuts, seeds, fatty fish.

**Facebook group.** If you'd like to join our private Facebook group to connect further with participants past and present, please search for us at "[Project Age Well](#)."

**Next class.** We are looking forward to seeing you again next week for our class on **[day of the week] [date] at [time]** for our discussion on **[class topic]**!

In good health,  
[Instructor Names]

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**Resources.** Passing along the resources listed in workbook & those that came up in class, so that you have a clickable link:

**[NOTE: Be sure to add any additional resources that came up in class.]**

**How Ultra-Processed Food Came to Dominate Our Diets** – KQED Forum Program aired this week that we discussed:

<https://www.kqed.org/forum/2010101893523/how-ultra-processed-food-came-to-dominate-our-diets>

**Vegetable oils** – An article on industrial seed oils from Chris Kresser, MS if you would like to learn more: <https://chriskresser.com/how-industrial-seed-oils-are-making-us-sick/>

**How can I eat more nutrient-dense foods?** American Heart Association:

<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition-basics/how-can-i-eat-more-nutrient-dense-foods>

**The Healthy Eating Plate** – A guide for a balanced, nutrient-rich plate from Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health:

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/healthy-eating-plate/>

**The Harvard Nutrition Source** – An evidence-based resource for a variety of nutrition topics from Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health:

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/>

**Nutrition Facts Label** – Support in reading the nutrition facts label, including updates made in 2020 from the Food and Drug Administration:

<https://www.fda.gov/food/new-nutrition-facts-label/whats-new-nutrition-facts-label>

**Sugar Science: The Unsweetened Truth** – Guidance on identifying and limiting added sugars in the foods available in the US food system from University of California San Francisco: <https://sugarscience.ucsf.edu/hidden-in-plain-sight/>

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# Nutrition Class 5: Meal Planning for Savings and Wellness Lesson Plans

## Nutrition Class 5: Meal Planning for Savings and Wellness

**Estimated Time Required:** 75 minutes

**Participant Workbook Section:** Meal Planning for Wellness

**Class Overview:** The foundation of meal planning is ensuring enough access to quality nutritious foods. This class focuses on community food resources as a primary tool for planning meals. We start the class discussing available food resources in one's local region with an emphasis on money for food, groceries, prepared meals, and transportation to access these resources. The last half of the class covers strategies for meal planning, which is an introduction to the next nutrition class on batch cooking.

**Note:** You will need to update the slides and accompanying pages in the workbook to highlight what is available in your local region.

### Learning Objectives

After completing this class, participants will be able to:

1. Identify local food and / or transportation resources in their region.
2. Understand the benefits of meal planning.
3. Implement at least one strategy for budget meal planning.
4. Access one food and / or transportation resource of which they are in need.

### Class Outline

- Welcome and Connect: Icebreaker 25 min
  - *Engage in peer support*
- Discuss food and transportation resources in your region 25 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Identify resources*
- Basic tenants of budget meal planning and smart shopping 20 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Build skills*
- Closing and At-Home Activity 5 min
  - *Build skills*
  - *Identify resources*
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*



## **Suggested Discussion Topics and Tips**

Facilitators can utilize Breakout Rooms for increased personal social engagement.

- **Suggested breakout room questions:**
  - What is one thing you would like to accomplish soon? (Slide 8)
- **Suggested discussion prompts throughout class:**
  - Basic tenants of budget meal planning
    - If participants are receiving meals from your organization: What will you do once meals end as part of this program? (Slide 37)
    - How do you determine what you will purchase and prepare? (Slide 39)
    - What, if anything, would you like to change about your meal planning? (Slide 40)
    - Who recalls the 5 principles of eating well? (Slide 43)
    - What do you really like? What flavors are you craving? Any old dishes you love? (Slide 46)
    - What do you need to use soon? What are some foods that you regularly have on hand? What commonly goes bad in your refrigerator? (Slide 47)
    - Why assess what you have? (Slide 49)
    - Do you have a food budget? Do you stick to it? How do you determine your food budget? (Slide 56)
    - What are some foods that you regularly have on hand? What commonly goes bad in your refrigerator? (Slide 58)
    - Flexible with simple meals: Do you do this at home? What dishes do you use? (Slide 60)
  - Basic tenants of smart shopping
    - Who compares the cost per unit / ounce / etc. while purchasing food? (Slide 70)

## Sample Follow-Up Email

Hello!

**Thank you** for attending today's Project Age Well class on **Meal Planning & Food Resources!** It was wonderful learning about all you are hoping to accomplish in the coming months.

**Class feedback.** Kindly **click this link** [insert link to survey] to complete the **anonymous** class feedback survey. Your feedback guides us to ensure we are discussing relevant content in a way that makes sense.

**Facebook group.** If you'd like to join our private Facebook group to connect further with participants past and present, please search for us at "Project Age Well" [insert link to Facebook group].

**Quick class takeaways, especially if you were not able to attend:**

**[Update to reflect resources in your area and relevant to your population]**

**Food resources & transportation help are abundant in the Bay Area!** No one should go without help. If you or anyone you know need *any* resources, please:

Call 2-1-1 for general support in anything.

Visit [findhelp.org](http://findhelp.org) to search through resources on food, legal, housing, financial help, and beyond!

Visit pages 115 (food resources) and 118 (transportation) in your Project Age Well workbook!

If you already have CalFresh, check out your local Farmers Market's Market Match program to double your money. [Here are the Farmers Markets that participate in Market Match in Sonoma County!](#) This is quite an extensive list that also highlights locations and hours for each market.

[Imwalle Gardens](#), mentioned by Louise. Located at 685 West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street in Santa Rosa. Call 707-546-0279 for hours & more information.

[Trinity Baptist Church](#), mentioned by Mary. This is one of the many Redwood Empire Food Bank sites, but Mary mentioned she enjoys it because you can pick your own items! Located at 515 Powell Avenue in Healdsburg.

**Having a meal plan that you shop and cook for can be a tremendous help!** Perhaps an obvious truth, but hopefully something you're able to implement if you do not already.

**Facebook group.** If you'd like to join our private Facebook group to connect further with participants past and present, please search for us at "[Project Age Well.](#)"

**Next class.** We are looking forward to seeing you again next week for our class on **[day of the week] [date] at [time]** for our discussion on **[class topic]**!

In good health,  
[Instructor Names]

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# Nutrition Class 6: Cooking for Wellness Lesson Plans

## Nutrition Class 6: Cooking for Wellness

**Estimated Time Required:** 75 minutes

**Participant Workbook Section:** Cooking for Wellness

*“Eat anything you want, just cook it yourself.” - Michael Pollan, Michael Pollan on Cooking, RSA Shorts*

**Class Overview:** This class begins with identifying why cooking matters in terms of one’s health and wellbeing. The class then moves on to talking through the pros and cons of cooking as well as brainstorming ways to overcome stated barriers to cooking more. The class ends with group discussion of various strategies to facilitate cooking more, highlighting simple meals and the concept of batch preparation of modular ingredients and / or batch cooking meals for participants to implement on their own.

### Learning Objectives

After completing this class, participants will be able to:

1. Identify why cooking more can influence one’s own health and wellbeing.
2. Determine strategies to overcome one’s own barriers to cooking more.
3. Implement at least one strategy of batch prepping ingredients or batch cooking a meal in the coming week.

### Class Outline

- Welcome and Connect: Icebreaker 25 min
  - *Engage in peer support*
- Discuss pros and cons of cooking 20 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Identify resources*
- Strategies for cooking more with overview of batch cooking 25 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Build skills*
- Closing and At-Home Activity 5 min
  - *Build skills*
  - *Identify resources*
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*

## Suggested Discussion Topics and Tips

Facilitators can utilize Breakout Rooms for increased personal social engagement.

- **Suggested breakout room questions:**
  - What is one reason why you want to cook your meals? (Slide 17)
  - What is one thing you either like to cook or would like to learn to cook? (Slide 18)
  - How often did you eat home-cooked meals growing up? How often do you cook now? (Slide 19)
  
- **Suggested discussion prompts throughout class:**
  - Discuss pros and cons of cooking
    - What are some of the pros of cooking? (Slide 23)
    - Of these pros, what would be a personal benefit to you? (Slide 26)
    - What are some of the cons of cooking? (Slide 27)
    - Michael Pollan quote: Any input of thoughts from the group about this quote? (Slide 29)
    - Video: What comes to mind after listening to this video? (Slide 30)
  
  - Defining cooking and acknowledging one's own relationship with cooking
    - What do we even mean by "cooking"? (Slide 33)
    - Julia Child quote: Does this resonate with anyone? (Slide 34)
    - What are some of your ideas on how to cook more? What would be related to a meal plan that would make it more achievable? What would make you more inclined to get in the kitchen? What is your cooking style? (Slide 35)
    - What relationship do you have with planning and preparing meals? (Slide 38)
  
  - Barriers to cooking more and possible solutions
    - What gets in the way of cooking more? (Slide 40)
    - What are some of your strategies for overcoming these barriers? (Slide 41)
    - Most likely to prepare healthy meals if: What works for you? What else comes to mind? (Slide 43)
    - What other ingredients are key in your household? (Slide 47)
    - What other cooking tools are key in your household? (Slide 48)
    - What do you need to complete a meal plan? How do you get your ideas? (Slide 50)
    - What sites, if any, do you use for inspiration? Or do you enter a search? (Slide 52)

- o Batch cooking / strategize how to cook more
  - What is batch prep and cooking? (Slide 59)
  - What are the benefits of batch prep and cooking? (Slide 60)
  - What ideas do you have or currently use for batch meals? What concerns do you have about making several meals/ingredients in advance? Who likes routine and the same flavors? Who likes to mix it up? How can we accommodate? (Slide 71)
  - Can you make a pot of beans, lentils, brown rice, and quinoa? Roast potatoes, sweet potatoes? (Slide 72)
  - Any other ideas of items / individual components that can be prepared ahead of time and incorporated throughout the week? Anything you already do at present? (Slide 73)
  - Show of hands, does anyone already have a routine around shopping or cooking? How does this sit with you? Is this practical? How much time could you dedicate? (Slide 74)
  - Is there a way we can reframe cooking, if something we do not enjoy? (Slide 75)
  
- o Group brainstorm on recipe ideas / goal setting
  - Group brainstorm: What could we do with raw carrots? (Slide 152-153)
  - Group brainstorm: What could we do with chickpeas? (Slide 154-155)
  - Group brainstorm: What could we do with split peas? (Slide 156-157)
  - What could you commit to preparing this week? What would you need in order to do that? (Slide 158)

### **Sample Follow-Up Email**

**Hello!**

**Thank you** for attending today's Project Age Well class on **Cooking for Wellness!** [Resources listed at the end of the e-mail].

**Class feedback.** Kindly **click this link** [insert link to survey] to complete the **anonymous** class feedback survey. Your feedback guides us to ensure we are discussing relevant content in a way that makes sense.

**Facebook group.** If you'd like to join our private Facebook group to connect further with participants past and present, please search for us at "**Project Age Well**" [insert link to Facebook group].

**Class takeaways for the week ahead:**

**Cooking your own meals can have an abundance of benefits.** To name a few: knowing what goes into your food, having a relationship with what you eat, improving your health, practicing mindfulness, engaging the senses. But there are also challenges to doing so! [[Here is the Michael Pollan video on Cooking!](#)]

**Batch cooking meals or prepping ingredients can help!** To overcome some of these challenges to cooking, it might help to cook meals (frittatas, soups / stews, chili, meatballs) or prep ingredients (hard boil eggs, cook beans, roast or microwave vegetables, shredded cabbage, batch cook rice or pasta). This can save time, money, clean up, etc.!

**Facebook group.** If you'd like to join our private Facebook group to connect further with participants past and present, please search for us at "[Project Age Well](#)."

**Next class.** We are looking forward to seeing you again next week for our class on **[day of the week] [date] at [time]** for our discussion on **[class topic]**!

In good health,  
[Instructor Names]

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### **Resources listed in your workbook & others discussed in class:**

**[NOTE: Be sure to add any additional resources that came up in class.]**

**Tools to make cooking easier:** [InstantPot](#), [Air Fryer](#), [Electric Stir Fry Wok](#)

**Toaster Oven Love** (<https://toasterovenlove.com/>) – Recipes and how-to guides for cooking healthy meals with a toaster oven, ***air fryer***, or microwave!

**101 Cookbooks** (<https://www.101cookbooks.com/ingredient.html>) – Great repository of recipes, searchable by ingredient!

**Feasting at Home** (<https://www.feastingathome.com/>) – simple, seasonal, veggie-focused recipes

**Budget Bytes** (<https://www.budgetbytes.com/>) – Delicious recipes for small budgets

**Eatfresh.org** (<https://eatfresh.org/find-a-recipe>) – CalFresh resource for recipes for meals on a budget; many filters by dietary needs and cooking environment

**USDA Recipe Finder** (<https://www.nutrition.gov/recipes>) – Helpful filters and search tool by meal type, food group, time available, and more!



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**Nutrition Class 7: Food & Mood  
Lesson Plans**

## Nutrition Class 7: Food & Mood

**Estimated Time Required:** 75 minutes

**Participant Workbook Section:** Food & Mood

*“Cope with Your Emotions with Kindness. First, recognize that food restriction, both physically and mentally, can, in and of itself, trigger loss of control, which can feel like emotional eating. Find kind ways to comfort, nurture, distract, and resolve your issues. Anxiety, loneliness, boredom, and anger are emotions we all experience throughout life. Each has its own trigger, and each has its own appeasement. Food won’t fix any of these feelings. It may comfort for the short term, distract from the pain, or even numb you. But food won’t solve the problem. If anything, eating for an emotional hunger may only make you feel worse in the long run. You’ll ultimately have to deal with the source of the emotion.”* - Evelyn Tribole and Elyse Resch, *Ten Principles of Intuitive Eating*, [intuitiveeating.org](http://intuitiveeating.org)

**Class Overview:** This class focuses on a less discussed nutrition topic that has a profound impact on several dimensions of wellness: *how the foods we eat affect our mood* as well as *why we eat*, discussing the vast array of factors that influence our eating in addition to physical hunger. The class starts with acknowledging the different emotions participants have been experiencing recently. Then the group reviews evidence-based mechanisms behind how food can boost our mood and brain health, then identifies some of the ways emotions, our environment and other factors can impact our eating decisions. The class closes with practicing the use of two tools to recognize hunger and mitigate mindless eating: (1) the physical hunger scale for visualizing cues of hunger and fullness, and (2) brainstorming ways to feel good, distract or deal with root causes of emotional and mindless eating. If time permits, there are recipes to share that feature broccoli, a brain-boosting ingredient!

### Learning Objectives

After completing this class, participants will be able to:

1. Name several prominent emotions they have noticed in the past few weeks.
2. Identify foods that can boost the mood and support brain health.
3. Articulate some of the many factors that influence eating habits and decisions.
4. Demonstrate the ability to be aware of physical hunger and fullness cues.
5. Practice the concept of pausing, pondering, and proceeding before eating.
6. Identify at least one feasible alternative to emotional or mindless eating.
7. Implement at least one of these identified alternatives to emotional or mindless eating in the coming week.

## Class Outline

- Welcome and Connect: Icebreaker 20 min
  - *Engage in peer support*
- How food can boost our mood and help our brains 10 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
- How emotions and external factors impact our eating 15 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Build skills*
- Practice reconnecting with physical hunger 10 min
  - *Build skills*
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
- Brainstorm alternatives to emotional or mindless eating 10 min
  - *Build skills*
  - *Identify resources*
  - *Engage in peer support*
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
- Closing and At-Home Activity 5 min
  - *Build skills*
  - *Identify resources*
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
- Kitchen Inspiration: Brain-boosting broccoli dishes 5 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Build skills*

## Suggested Discussion Topics and Tips

Facilitators can utilize Breakout Rooms for increased and more personal social engagement.

- **Suggested breakout room questions:**
  - Think about the last few weeks. How have you been feeling? What are the most prominent emotions you've felt during this time? (Slides 16-19)
- **Suggested discussion prompts throughout class:**
  - How food can boost our mood and help our brains
    - Has anyone had any experience with food either improving or upsetting their mood? What did this look like? (Slide 20)

- Does anyone eat some of these foods regularly? See one that they would add to their day? (Slide 33)
- o How emotions and external factors impact our eating
- What drives us to eat? Why/when does my body tell me to eat? Why/when does my mind tell me to eat? Am I really aware of all the situations and/or emotions that trigger me to want to eat when I'm not hungry? Do I find myself eating even though I said I wouldn't? Why? What aspects of the decision to eat do I control? Not? (Slide 36)
  - Who has had an experience with eating in response to an emotion or feeling? What was this like? Does anyone have an eating pattern that is common for you? (Slide 37)
  - Our instinct to eat: Can you think of instances in your life when these have been the motivator to eat? (Slide 38)
  - What is your first or a prominent memory of eating for reasons not related to hunger? (Slide 43)
  - Who has a smell memory? Describe the sensation...how powerful are these? How about a positive association with food? Negative? (Slide 44)
  - What things do you see falling under acute stress? Under chronic stress? What is the difference between the types of hunger we see on each side? (Slide 49)
  - Factors that drive us to eat: Do any of these factors jump out at you? Have you had any experience with these? Which of these factors could be positive? Which are you concerned about? Is there a way you can set up your immediate home environment to be supportive of your health goals? (Slide 54)
- o Practice reconnecting with physical hunger
- How hungry or full am I? How do I know if I'm hungry? What does my body feel like? My thoughts? How do I act? Can I tell the difference between physical hunger and head hunger? (Slide 63)
  - Physical hunger scale: Where do you fall on this scale right now? How often do you exist at a 0 to 2? A 9 to 10? Why do you think this is the case? What are some of the physical experiences we have when we are at a "2"? A "9"? A "5"? What happens when we are at a 0 to 2? (Slide 64)
  - How can we identify the beginnings of hunger? Or fullness? (Slide 75)
  - Physical hunger cues: Why is it important to be in tune with these sensations? (Slide 76)

## Sample Follow-Up Email

Hello everyone!

**Thank you** for attending today's Project Age Well class on **Food & Mood!** [Resources at end of e-mail].

**Class feedback.** Kindly **click this link** [insert link to survey] to complete the **anonymous** class feedback survey. Your feedback guides us to ensure we are discussing relevant content in a way that makes sense.

**Facebook group.** If you'd like to join our private Facebook group to connect further with participants past and present, please search for us at "**Project Age Well**" [insert link to Facebook group].

### **Class takeaways:**

**Food can directly impact our mood and mental health AND mood can impact our food choices.** Eating the balanced plate and focusing on oily fish, olive oil, nuts, seeds, avocado, vegetables, fruits, and beans can have a tremendous positive impact on our mental wellbeing! And see the next bullet point on how mood can impact our eating choices, along with many other factors!

**Pay attention to and bring awareness to the many factors that drive you to eat.** To name a few: physical hunger, our home environment, emotions, mindless eating / boredom, patterns / associations, stress, cues in our environment, advertising, and you all brought up many more!

**Pause, Ponder, Proceed.** Next time you get the urge to eat, take a moment to check in with yourself. Is food what you need? If so, eat! If not, is there another way to nourish yourself?

**Have grace with yourself.** There is SO MUCH that influences when, what, how much, and why we eat. Have some grace with yourself and focus on bringing awareness to these different decision points.

**Facebook group.** If you'd like to join our private Facebook group to connect further with participants past and present, please search for us at "[Project Age Well](#)".

**Next class.** We are looking forward to seeing you again next week for our class on **[day of the week] [date] at [time]** for our discussion on **[class topic]**!

In good health,  
[Instructor Names]

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**Resources listed in your workbook and those mentioned in class:**

**[NOTE: Be sure to add any additional resources that came up in class.]**

**Ten Principles of Intuitive Eating** (Intuitive Eating.org):  
<https://www.intuitiveeating.org/10-principles-of-intuitive-eating/>

**Food and mood: how do diet and nutrition affect mental wellbeing?** (British Medical Journal, 2020): <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7322666/>

**Food and mood: Is there a connection?** (Harvard Health Publishing, 2021):  
<https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/food-and-mood-is-there-a-connection>

**Dietary Patterns and Quality of Life in Older Adults: A Systematic Review** (Nutrients, 2018): <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6115962/>

**What do we know about diet and prevention of Alzheimer’s disease?** (National Institute on Aging, 2019):  
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/what-do-we-know-about-diet-and-prevention-alzheimers-disease>

**The regulation of food intake in humans** (National Library of Medicine, 2016):  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK278931/>

**The Hunger Rating Scale** (American Diabetes Association):  
<https://diabetes.org/healthy-living/weight-loss/emotions-and-eating/get-touch-your-appetite>

**Just Eat It – Hunger body Scan** (Laura Thomas, PhD, adapted from Evelyn Tribole, MS RDN and Elyse Resch, MS RDN):  
<https://soundcloud.com/pan-macmillan/just-eat-it-hunger-body-scan>

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**Nutrition Class 8: Our Bodies and Nutrition as We Age  
Lesson Plans**



## Nutrition Class 8: Our Bodies and Nutrition as We Age

**Estimated Time Required:** 75 minutes

**Participant Workbook Section:** Our Bodies and Nutrition as We Age

**Class Overview:** This is a wonderful class with which to end the Project Age Well series, if possible. This class ties together many of the aspects of the various topics from nutrition and wellness classes – reinforcing that we need to take a holistic approach on what it means to age well. This class begins with learning about the “Blue Zone” populations from around the world. We discuss that while there is no one single “solution” to aging well, there are some key components that these populations have in common: keeping socially engaged, having a plant-forward eating pattern, not smoking, cherishing family, and maintaining natural movement. The class then invites participants to tune into their bodies as they have aged and note any changes in their body systems as well as changes in their eating habits. We then review seven main ways in which our bodies typically change as we age and how to manage these through food and nutrition. If time permits, there are hydrating simple soup recipes to share! Finally, if this is the last class in the series, we encourage participants to share key takeaways from their time in Project Age Well – what are they walking away from the program with?

### Learning Objectives

After completing this class, participants will be able to:

1. Define the components of what aging well means for oneself.
2. Name the five core habits of those living in Blue Zone populations.
3. Identify at least one area in which their body or eating habits have changed recently.
4. Implement one small habit to be able to address one of these changes in body or eating habits.

### Class Outline

- Welcome and Connect: Icebreaker 20 min
  - *Engage in peer support*
- Discuss what “aging well” means to us 10 min
  - *Engage in peer support*
- Learn about those who have aged well (Blue Zone example) 15 min
  - *Gain knowledge*

- Think about how our bodies and eating habits change as related to food and nutrition 15 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Build skills*
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
  
- Closing and At-Home Activity 5 min
  - *Build skills*
  - *Identify resources*
  - *Engage in self-monitoring and tracking behaviors*
  
- Kitchen Inspiration: 4 Simple Soups to Hydrate and Nourish 5 min
  - *Gain knowledge*
  - *Build skills*
  
- Project Age Well Takeaways (Optional, if last class) 5 min
  - *Identify resources*
  - *Engage in peer support*

## **Suggested Discussion Topics and Tips**

Facilitators can utilize Breakout Rooms for increased personal social engagement.

- **Suggested breakout room questions:**
  - What's something that has gone especially well for you this past week? (Slide 20)
  - What's been a challenge this past week? (Slide 21)
  - *If last class, at end:* What is your Project Age Well takeaways? (Slide 115)
  
- **Suggested discussion prompts throughout class:**
  - Discuss what "aging well" means to us
    - What does aging well mean to you? (Slide 24)
    - What does "lifestyle" mean? What are some components of our lifestyle? (Slide 32)
  
  - Learn about those who have aged well (Blue Zone example)
    - Has anyone heard of the term "blue zone?" Do you know what they are? (Slide 33)
    - Blue Zone Video Clip: What did you hear from that video? (Slide 38)

- In response to the 5 Core Habits from Blue Zones populations, any thoughts from the group in regard to these? Who engages in any of these core habits at present? Ideas on how to incorporate more? Are some easier than others? (Slide 51)
- o Think about how our bodies and eating habits change as related to food and nutrition
  - After reflecting on these different areas of body that may be on your mind, does anyone care to share anything surprising? (Slide 60)
  - Making foods more nutrient dense: Does anything come to your mind as to how you might do this? (Slide 72)
  - Which of these vegetables are you drawn to first? Why? What experience do you have with it? What is one that you have questions about or would like to try? (Slide 77)
  - Calcium, Vitamin D, and Vitamin B12 rich foods: Were these foods expected? Which of these do you enjoy? Which would you be open to trying? Any questions? (Slide 80)
  - How often do you feel thirsty? Do you drink based on thirst, by schedule? (Slide 83)
  - What do you do to make sure you are hydrated? (Slide 85-86)
  - Losing sense of smell or taste: Have you experienced this? What have you done in response? (Slide 87-88)
  - What other health conditions or medications do you have questions about? (Slides 94 -98)

### **Sample Follow-Up Email**

Hi all,

**Thank you** for attending today's Project Age Well class on **Our Bodies and Nutrition as We Age** – the final class!

**Class feedback.** Kindly **click this link** [insert link to survey] to complete the ***anonymous*** class feedback survey. Your feedback guides us to ensure we are discussing relevant content in a way that makes sense.

**Facebook group.** If you'd like to join our private Facebook group to connect further with participants past and present, please search for us at "**Project Age Well**" [insert link to Facebook group].

### **Class takeaways:**

**Aging Well means different things to all of us!** Some things that came up in class: [insert thoughts shared in class.]

**Remember the Blue Zone simplicity!** What the folks living in longevity areas have in common is not rocket science: no smoking, staying physically active, keeping socially engaged, cherishing family, and having an eating pattern rich in plants! [Here is the video](#) that we watched in class.

**Our bodies inevitably change as we age, which impacts our nutritional needs.** A reminder to continue to add colorful vegetables and fruits, eat healthy fats, and consider probiotic rich foods (yogurt, kimchee, sauerkraut, etc).

**Check in with yourself.** Are there any loud or quiet signals from your body you can pay attention to and tend to?

In good health,  
[Instructor Names]

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**Resources mentioned in class as well as those listed in your workbook, in case you want to dig deeper:**

**[NOTE: Be sure to add any additional resources that came up in class.]**

**Lessons from the Blue Zones** – Read more about the Blue Zone populations and the trends in those populations as related to health (Institute of Medicine)  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK298903/>

**MyPlate and Dietary Guidance for Older Adults** – Summary of nutritional guidance for older adults and ideas for incorporating health-supporting foods (United States Department of Agriculture) <https://www.myplate.gov/life-stages/older-adults>

**The Healthy Eating Plate**– A guide for a balanced, nutrient-rich plate(Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health)  
<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/healthy-eating-plate/>

**The Harvard Nutrition Source**– An evidence-based resourcefor a varietyof nutrition topics (Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health)  
<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/>

**Probiotic Foods** – A description of probiotics and several example foods (Healthline)  
<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/11-super-healthy-probiotic-foods>

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