



Sisters in Health: A Nutrition Program for Women

This research-based community food and nutrition education program encourages women to eat and enjoy fruits and vegetables through active experiences with food in a positive social setting.

Objective: Participants will increase their vegetable and fruit intake.

Audience: Young to middle-aged low-income women in programs such as GED, Head Start, Food Stamp Nutrition Education, and Expanded Food and Nutrition Education programs.

Program Features: A flexible series of six weekly meetings for groups of about 10 women that emphasize practical ways to prepare delicious, quick, and inexpensive fruits and vegetables.

- *Focus on fruits and vegetables*
- *Builds on participants' skills and experience:* Participants learn as they cook and talk together, sharing their skills and experiences.
- *Responsive to participants interests:* Participants select meeting topics and which foods to prepare. Participants contribute healthful recipes that reflect their cultural heritage.
- *Positive social setting:* Activities focus on talking, cooking, tasting and learning together.
- *Focus on taste:* Emphasis on enjoying and learning how to choose and prepare delicious fruits and vegetables that all family members will like.
- *Active learning:* Centered on preparing food and activities that encourage participants to share their knowledge and skills. Strategies include exposure to food in a positive social setting, peer modeling, child-friendly recipes, active learning, skill practice, self-assessment, goal setting, and personal choice.

Program Materials: A leader's guide with a series of 10 flexible meetings; each group selects 6.

- Each meeting includes: a welcome or warm-up, food preparation and tasting, a group learning activity, a take-home challenge, and planning for the next meeting.
- Each meeting includes: learning objectives, an agenda, meeting preparation tips, guides to activities, background information, recipes, and templates for group activities
- Spanish language version adapted by The Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wnep/tch_res/res_detail.cfm?resource_id=330

Program Impact: In a community trial intervention groups reported eating significantly more ($p < .05$) fruits and vegetables (1.6 more times/day vs. 0.8 more times/day in control groups).¹

Collaborators: Funding from USDA CSREES; Program design and evaluation by C. Devine and T. Farrell, Division of Nutritional Sciences, Cornell University and R. Hartman, Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Schuyler County; Tested by Extension professional and paraprofessional educators in 21 CCE Associations.

Program Availability: The 100-page leader's guide, *Sisters in Health – A Nutrition Program for Women* (ISBN 1-57753-261-9) is available from Dr. Carol Devine (cmd10@cornell.edu) for \$16.95 (check payable to Cornell University). Information at: http://nutrition.cornell.edu/dns_sihabout.html

¹Devine C, Farrell T, Hartman R. Sisters in Health: experiential program emphasizing social interaction increases fruit and vegetable intake among low-income adults. *J Nutr Educ Behav.* 2005;37:365-270.

