

As you begin to work on increasing healthful eating as an outcome in your congregation, of course you look toward a goal of changes in environment and policy. Changes in the food environment at your church will model the healthful eating behaviors that you endorse, introduce congregants and community members to new foods or new ways to cook that make their diets more healthful, and support the behavior changes that many of your members are working on. Just as importantly, healthful food environments send a clear message to members and visitors that your congregation believes that the body is a temple of God and that a part of care for that body is healthful eating.

In reality, not everyone is aware of easy changes that can be made in their diets. Others do not have the skill levels to prepare healthful meals. This is why, in addition to the environmental and policy changes that support healthful eating, your congregation will probably also need to work on developing the knowledge and skills of members and community members. Keep in mind that this level of program is in addition to the environmental and policy changes, not a substitute for them!

The Choose MyPlate session will provide an overview of dietary recommendations with some additional handouts and tools for discussion of specific topics, like salt/sodium, beverage choices, and portion control. We recommend that any series concerning food should begin with this session. There is one slide set and a Trainer's Guide. Use the Trainer's Guide to walk your group through slide presentations.

Most importantly, have fun! Diet should not be a dirty word. Nutrition should be about tasting and enjoying the preparation and eating of healthful foods with family and friends. JJ