



Eating for a Healthy Life

A Program for
Your Faith Community



Welcome to Eating For a Healthy Life!

What is Eating For a Healthy Life?

Eating for a Healthy Life is a dietary change intervention project designed to help faith community members make healthier eating choices for themselves and their families. Specifically, the project encourages people to lower their fat intake and to increase fruit, vegetable and whole grain consumption.

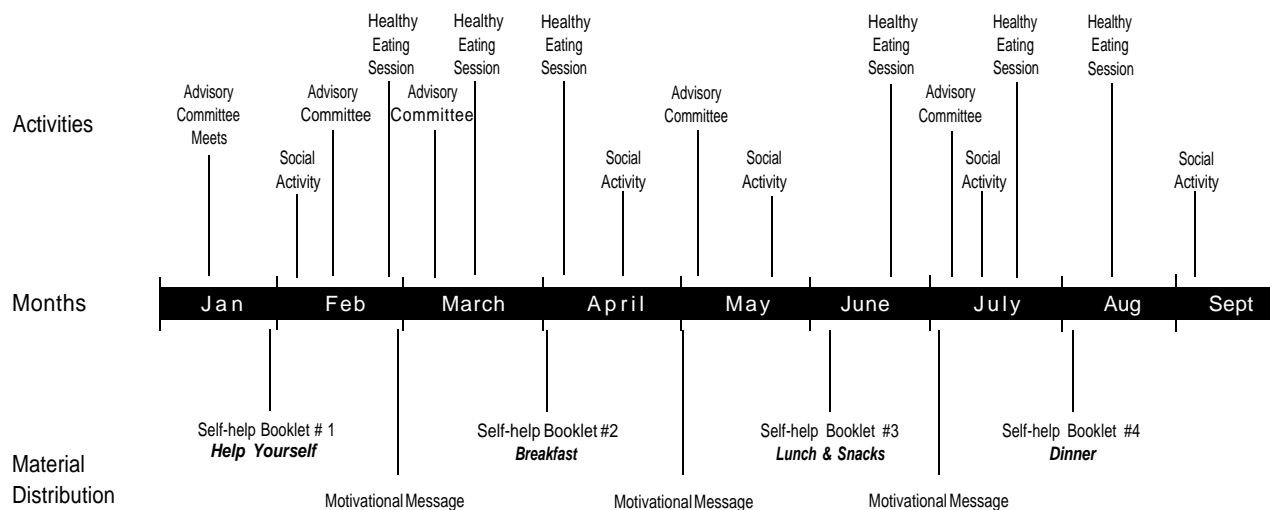
Why Eating For a Healthy Life?

Research has shown that diets low in fat and high in fruit and vegetables help to lower the risk of developing cancer, heart disease, and other chronic diseases. People who have healthy diets can also feel better and can report more energy. Eating for a Healthy Life aims to promote physical well being along with spiritual health.

How do I get started?

There are many activities to choose from. We recommend that you choose a variety of activities that appeal to many types of people. Some people are very interested in nutrition and might have more interest in attending a healthy eating class. Some people are less interested in nutrition but may be interested in attending a food tasting after service. A poster with a healthy eating message is a great idea for everyone! Below is a suggested schedule of activities that we have used in our research project. Please feel free to create a schedule to match the needs of your faith community.

Sample Planning Timeline for your Faith Community's Healthy Eating Intervention



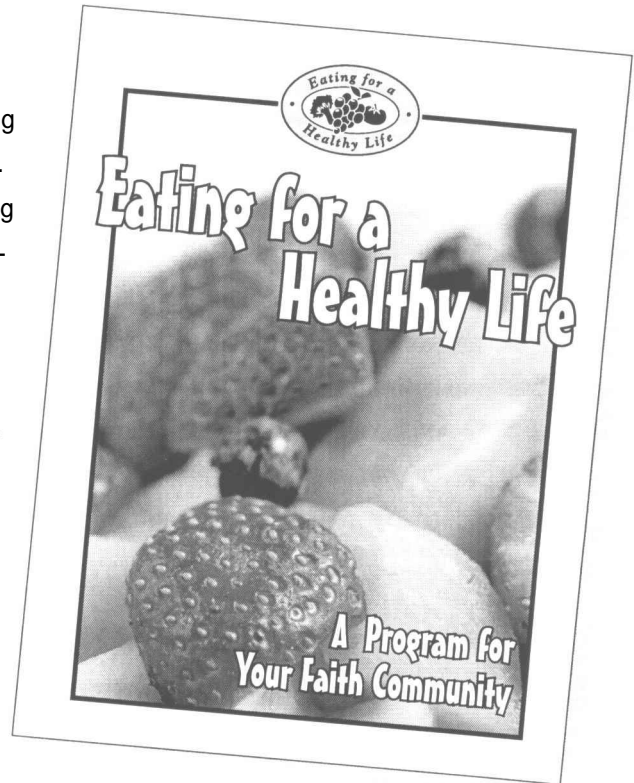


What is this manual?

This manual serves as a step-by-step “how to” guide for creating dietary change activities and materials for your faith community. You can use this manual to find educational materials including healthy recipes that you can copy and distribute. A list of community resources is also included. This manual outlines all necessary steps to implement each component of the intervention. Included is an appendix containing all of the materials needed to create healthy eating activities at your faith community. Keep an eye out for the “At Your Fingertips” boxes that guide you to materials in the Appendix.

What are the Eating For a Healthy Life intervention components?

As illustrated by the Sample Planning Timeline, several components are incorporated into the intervention in an effort to involve all members of your faith community. For the purposes of this manual, an intervention is a set of healthy eating activities for your faith community members and their family and friends.



- **Advisory Committee:** The Advisory Committee serves as the planning and organizing group to incorporate the intervention into your faith community.
- **Social Activities:** Social Activities are designed to be a fun way to teach and engage faith community members in healthy eating.
- **Healthy Eating Sessions:** Healthy Eating Sessions provide a classroom setting for a more in-depth discussion of a healthy eating topic.
- **Self-Help Booklets:** Self-Help Booklets are informational guides to help members of your faith community make healthy food and meal choices.
- **Motivational Messages:** Motivational Messages in the form of posters or flyers deliver eye-catching information about the importance of eating a healthy diet.

Additional components involved in the intervention include Tip Sheet and Recipe handouts that accompany activities and advertising for upcoming events.

Welcome to Eating For a Healthy Life!

Again, we welcome you to Eating for a Healthy Life. It is our hope that you will share in our enthusiasm and find the project to be helpful in developing healthier eating habits in your faith community.

The Advisory Committee

Congratulations on deciding to include Eating for a Healthy Life into the activities of your faith community. The first step you need to consider is forming an advisory committee.

The advisory committee is a group of faith community members that will help plan the healthy eating activities at your faith community. You'll want this committee to be inclusive and representative of the congregation. The committee should be large enough that the tasks are not overwhelming, but small enough to be efficient. Six to eight is generally a good number. The motivation of your faith community members to participate in the activities will depend on the enthusiasm of this committee. By including members from all areas of the congregation such as religious and lay leadership along with other members of the faith community, you will help your members embrace Eating for a Healthy Life and see it as a fun and interesting way to learn more about healthy eating.

At Your Fingertips

The following materials are located under the Advisory Committee tab of this notebook to help you get started.

- Sample agenda
- Meeting minutes and agenda template
- Evaluation and Monitoring Record
- Sample forms and recruitment flyer





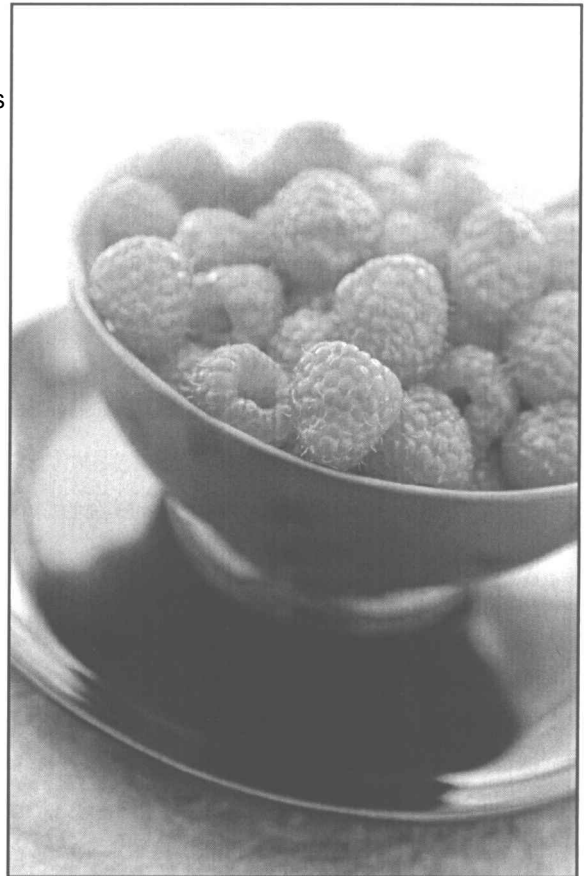
How to Form an Advisory Committee within Your Faith Community

There are two ways to Form an advisory committee

1. Include this new project into the responsibilities of an existing committee, such as a health committee or other interested group.
2. Form a new committee by recruiting members from your faith community who have an interest in health and wellness.

Recruiting people For the advisory committee

- Announce that you are looking for people to be part of the committee. You can do this by putting an announcement in the bulletin or newsletter, having a sign up sheet on a bulletin board, reading an announcement after religious services, or by using any other ways that would work well in your faith community.
- Use several different methods of recruitment so all members hear about the new committee.
- Consider asking individuals in your faith community who have expertise in a health field if they are interested in taking part. These members may be able to offer insight, direction, and resources for the advisory committee.



Skills to look for when recruiting advisory committee members

- Ability to communicate the purpose and goals of Eating for a Healthy Life.
- Ability to motivate, coordinate and organize people and activities. Does this person understand the tasks required and are they able to direct others as well as themselves to complete those tasks in an efficient manner? Are they good with people, able to delegate, and able to work as a team?
- Demonstrate an interest in health and wellness. It is not necessary to be a health expert. Interest and willingness to learn are all that are required.
- Reliability. Does this individual do what they say they will do? Follow-through is important to the success of any group.



How to Hold an Advisory Committee Meeting

Now that recruitment for the advisory committee is completed or in progress, it is time to begin organizing the committee. This group will provide the direction and backbone for success of Eating for a Healthy Life. These early planning meetings will lay the foundation for all the work that is to come.

Schedule and hold your first meeting

- Don't hesitate to call or send meeting reminders to the committee.

Develop a work plan

- It will be helpful to look at planning far the entire year ahead. Your plan will need to determine ways to include the Eating for a Healthy Life activities into the existing structure of your faith community. In order for this project to be fully embraced by the membership as a whole, it must be perceived as a part of the mission of your faith community. In planning activities and events, look for ways to incorporate a healthy eating component into the current plans of your faith community. Do you have summer picnics, special occasion buffets, potlucks, or formal dinners where a healthy eating activity will blend well? This way, members of your faith community will perceive these activities as part of the congregation's functions and will accept these new ideas more readily.

Keep careful minutes of your meetings

- You will then have a good record of decisions that you make, job assignments, as well as due dates.

Develop a system to monitor and evaluate the activities and events

- What things do people seem to like the best, how many people took part in a particular event? These records are helpful as you plan new activities or decide whether to do a particular activity a second time.

Celebrate

- It is most important that you have fun, celebrate the work that you do and reward yourselves and your helpers for the work that they do. Certificates of appreciation, a volunteer appreciation lunch, even thank you notes let people know how much their work is appreciated.

Think ahead

- Each year set aside a time to develop a new work plan for the coming year. By using the information in your minutes as well as your evaluation records, you can effectively plan and coordinate your activities to fit with the overall plans of your faith community.