



## **Chef Charles Says...**

A newsletter for congregate meal participants for the month of May

**Chef Charles Club is defined as a group of people who meet with a leader or instructor to learn and discuss how nutrition and physical activity can make a difference in their lives. Participants receive a monthly Chef Charles newsletter from the instructor.**

The survey data we collect from Chef Charles participants tells us that instructors do make a difference. For example, in 2009 Chef Charles focused on encouraging participants to eat more fruits and veggies. Chef Charles Club members who participated in activities reported eating more fruits and veggies at meals (56%) and snacks (50%) while those who **just read** the newsletter alone reported more produce consumption at meals (40%) and snacks (39%). While both groups were eating more fruits and veggies, those with an instructor made a bigger change. The time you spend preparing for a Chef Charles Club is valuable for the health of your participants. **Thank you.**

In 2010, Chef Charles wants to answer your questions. What questions do you have? Start thinking about them now and discuss it at your meal site. You can send questions to [susanklein50@gmail.com](mailto:susanklein50@gmail.com). Each month you will find a column that answers a question from a meal site.

Chef Charles is concerned that many older adults who are eligible are not participating in the Food Stamp Program. It is now called SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program); in Iowa the program is called Food Assistance. As an instructor for Chef Charles you can help those in your club understand that the SNAP program can make a big difference in their food budget. The **Pick A Better Veggie for You** article gives you an opportunity to discuss how the SNAP program can help older adults buy enough fruits and vegetables for a healthy diet. It just takes a little planning to make sure the produce is available when you prepare a meal or a snack. Other activities you can do include:

- Invite a Department of Human Services Staff member to your site to talk about the Food Assistance program.
- Bookmark [www.benefitscheckup.org](http://www.benefitscheckup.org) on site computers for participants to visit.
- Remind participants that the EBT cards are handy to use at local stores for food purchases. Many of the farmers' markets also take EBT cards.
- Encourage participants to apply on-line for Food Assistance [www.yesfood.iowa.gov](http://www.yesfood.iowa.gov).

We encourage you to use the questions at the end of the instructor's guide. This provides feedback to us regarding the success of the Chef Charles program in helping participants to eat healthier, be more active and have safe food. Ask your group the questions at the beginning of your Chef Charles meeting and then again at the end. This will reinforce key points and identify if the participants know the answers.



## Get the News

### Props:

- Newsprint and markers or chalk board

## Eat Your Fruits and Veggies for Your Heart's Sake

There is strong evidence that a diet rich in fruits and vegetables can lower the risk of heart disease and stroke. A study with more than 110,000 men and women followed for 14 years showed that the higher the average daily intake of fruits and vegetables, the lower the chances of developing cardiovascular disease. Those who averaged eight or more servings a day were 30 percent less likely to have had a heart attack or stroke than those eating less than one and a half servings daily. Although all fruits and vegetables likely contribute to this benefit, green leafy vegetables, cruciferous vegetables and citrus make important contributions.

Other studies also found the protective effects of eating more fruits and vegetables. Eating five servings of fruits and vegetables daily lowered the risk of coronary heart disease and stroke.

Source: J Natl Cancer Inst. 2004; 96:1577–84 & J Hum Hypertens. 2007; 21:717–28.

Beneficial Fruits and Vegetables		
Green Leafy Vegetables	Cruciferous Vegetables	Citrus Fruits (including their juices)
Dark green lettuce	Broccoli	Oranges
Spinach	Cauliflower	Lemons
Swiss chard	Cabbage	Limes
Mustard greens	Brussels sprouts	Grapefruit
	Kale	

### Activity

**Say to the group:** Once again this article emphasizes that fruits and vegetables are important for our health. How many fruits and vegetables do you eat a day? Let me share what I plan to eat and we will see if I am eating enough and if I am eating the best choices. *Write on the newsprint or chalk board the following list of foods that are a sample menu.*



## Breakfast

- ¾ cup oatmeal
- ¾ cup orange juice
- 1 cup fat-free milk

## Lunch

- Tuna Grape salad sandwich (includes celery, grapes; romaine lettuce),
- ½ cup steamed broccoli/carrots
- ½ canned pear

## Dinner

- 1 ½ cups Chicken & Spanish rice (includes green peppers, tomato sauce, peas)
- 1 cup cantaloupe
- 1 small whole wheat roll
- 1 teaspoon margarine
- 1 cup fat-free milk

## Snack

- ½ cup fruit cocktail
- 1 cup fat-free yogurt

If you are a woman over 51 years of age (1600 calories) you need 1 ½ cups fruit a day and 2 cups of vegetables. A man the same age (2000 calories) needs 2 cups fruit and 2 ½ cups vegetables. Could someone circle the fruits and vegetables on our list? Now let's count. I see at least 1 ½ cups fruit, and with the vegetables found in both the sandwich and Spanish rice we would have 2 cups.

Let's look at the chart of fruits and vegetables that are beneficial for our heart healthiness. Circle in your newsletter the foods on our sample menu. It looks like we have a food in each one of the columns. It may seem like a lot of bother to make sure you have all the fruits and vegetables you need but it is important for your health. Just make sure you have a fruit and or a vegetable at every meal and snack and you will go a long way to having the produce you need. And remember to attend congregate meals as often as you can because they serve several fruits and vegetables at each meal.



## Pick a Better...

### Props:

- Bowl or hat
- Small slips of paper with one statement written on each slip.

## Veggie for You

### Make Veggies Easy

- Stock up on **frozen vegetables** for quick microwave preparation.
- Plan some meals around a cup of vegetable soup and a salad.
- Keep a bowl of **cut-up vegetables** for a quick snack.
- Choose a different vegetable-based salad instead of a lettuce salad or a burger. For example, try a salad made mostly of carrots, broccoli, beans, and lentils. Go light on the salad dressing.

### Make Veggies Tasty

- **Buy fresh vegetables** in season. They cost less and are likely to be at their peak flavor. Freeze or dehydrate them for later use.
- Grill vegetable kabobs including tomatoes, mushrooms, green peppers, and onions. Or **sauté the same vegetables** on top of the stove with a little oil.
- Toss **cans** of kidney beans, wax beans, green beans and chickpeas with a low-calorie vinaigrette for a fast bean salad.

### Make Veggies Healthy

- Sauté veggies with a splash of olive oil instead of deep frying.
- Add fresh or dried herbs to flavor vegetables instead of butter and salt. For example, tomatoes go well with basil and oregano. Try rosemary on carrots.
- **Broil sliced vegetables** such as zucchini, bell peppers, eggplant, and tomatoes until they blacken around the edges. Serve warm with a low-calorie dressing of lemon juice and black pepper.

## Activity

Pass the hat or bowl and have participants draw a slip and read it to the group. Then ask the group to answer this question for each statement. **“If a person eats alone, is this a good suggestion and why?”**

Finish by asking “If a person uses the SNAP Program (formerly known as food stamps) how would the program help them to practice the suggested ideas?” Answer-With the added money you will be able to have more fruits and vegetables available.



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## Chef Charles Asks the Questions

### Props:

Newsprint or chalk board

## Meet Gail Smith

Meet Gail Smith, a veteran Chef Charles instructor teaching at 19 congregate meal sites in nine counties. Gail feels privileged to work with her older adults and makes sure each Chef Charles meeting is fun and interactive while teaching about nutrition, food safety, and exercise. For Gail the bottom line is 'quality of life' for all her programming.

Gail takes her job to heart. As an instructor, Gail evaluates her own life style as she teaches the lessons each month and personally focuses on exercise and good nutrition. She likes to serve the recipes in her home where her husband enjoys the results. Gail and her husband pay close attention to handling food safely. As a truck driver her husband hears many stories about safe food, but he stays safe by using information Gail shares from the Chef Charles program.

When Gail taught about the need to rinse fruits like a banana or watermelon before eating, she was pleased to hear the next month that the participants were indeed listening. She overheard a man sharing that he now rinses his banana before he peels it and eats it! This may seem like one small step to some but to Gail and her participants these are big steps to rethinking a life time of routine. Gail feels like she has a very big family now through the Chef Charles Club. And that is a good thing.

### Activity

**Say to the group:** Gail Smith, like me (the instructor), likes to know that her participants are practicing what she is teaching. What have you, the participant, learned and now practice from our Chef Charles programs? If you wish, you can make a list of the ideas on newsprint. The ideas may remind participants of all that they have learned.

## Be Active

### Props:

- None

## Stay Active, Ease Your Pain

If you are living with chronic pain from an injury or a health condition, you may have heard that exercise will aggravate your pain. But the truth is, not exercising can contribute to ongoing chronic pain. In fact, regular exercise can be an important part of your pain management program. Here are the facts on chronic pain and exercise.

Exercise strengthens your muscles and improves your flexibility, which can help decrease pain. Exercise also boosts energy levels and mood, making chronic pain easier to manage.

Before you start an exercise program, talk to your health professional about the types of activities you will be able to do.



### Ask these questions:

- How strenuous should my exercises be?
- How long should I exercise?
- What kinds of exercise are best for me?
- How often should I be exercising?
- What kind of warm-up and cool-down should I do?

### Motivate yourself to exercise with these tips:

- Think about the benefits. Remember how good exercise is for your body. In fact, exercise can prompt your body to release endorphins, your body's natural pain relievers.
- Exercise with a friend. Pair up with someone who is also working toward pain relief.
- Choose activities you enjoy. You are more likely to stick with a program if you are having fun.

### Activity

**Ask the group:** Is exercise part of your day? If not you should consider adding it. But before you do, make sure to check it out with a health professional. Use the questions in this article to help you choose the right exercise program for you. Before the class check with the site manager about any possible exercise programs that are available for the participants.

## Food Safety

### Props:

- Bottle or glass of water
- Bottle of vinegar
- Bottle of detergent

## Q & A

**QUESTION:** How do you wash a bunch of grapes? We are told to wash uncooked fruit, but most people do just a quick rinse. Is there anything wrong with adding a little soap to the wash for fresh produce?

**ANSWER:** The recommendation is to wash fruits and vegetables only in water because detergent and soap are not designed for human consumption. Some fruit surfaces can absorb soap residues that are not removed by rinsing.

Smooth skinned fruits like grapes should be rinsed under running water and fruits and vegetables with rough skins should be washed using a vegetable brush. Specifically designed vegetable/fruit washes are available, but current research indicates that washing with water is just as effective for removing dirt as these products.

If you must add something to the water to increase surfactant properties (that's what soap does in water) then use vinegar because it is safe for human consumption. Use 1 part vinegar to 3 parts water to wash the fruit and then rinse under clean water.

### Activity

Show the grapes (or picture) and ask how do you prepare the grapes to eat? (Hold up the bottle of detergent) do you wash with



this? Using the article explain why this is not a good idea. (Hold up a bottle of water and a bottle of vinegar) Use article to explain why water and sometimes vinegar is the best suggestion.





## Snacks

### Teaching Points:

- A great snack or accompaniment to a bowl of soup
- A good idea when you are cooking for just one or two people
- Try different cheese to change flavor

Pick a **better** snack



## Asparagus Bites

Top whole grain wheat crackers with chopped asparagus (steamed or raw). Top each cracker with one teaspoon shredded mozzarella cheese. Heat in microwave just until cheese melts.

Asparagus is 'in season' in May for Iowa.

## Recipes

### Teaching Points:

- Provides at least ½ cup vegetables
- How many cups of vegetables do we need each day? (1600 calories needs 2 cups) *Note the article on Get the News*

## Very Veggie Individual Pizza

- 1 whole wheat English muffin
- 1 tablespoon low-fat garlic/herb cream cheese
- ¼ cup broccoli florets
- 1 tablespoon carrots, shredded
- ¼ cup tomatoes, diced

Toast the English muffin. Spread the cream cheese, and then add the chopped veggies. Very simple and you can change the veggies depending on your personal likes. Recipe developed by Produce for Better Health Foundation and Shoney's, Inc.

Calories 18, Total Fat 4g, Saturated Fat 2g, Cholesterol 8mg, Protein 8g, Carbohydrates 31g, Dietary fiber 4 g, Sodium 280mg, Potassium 376mg, Folate 54mcg



### Did You Learn Any New Ideas?

1. Eating fruits and vegetables each days lowers the risk of\_\_\_\_?
2. What kinds of fruits and vegetables contribute most to lower risk to #1?
3. When you wash fresh produce never use\_\_\_\_\_?
4. Before starting an exercise program visit your\_\_\_\_\_?
5. Name one behavior you have adopted because of Chef Charles.

### Your Answers

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### Order Your Materials (provided to Iowa Nutrition Network Partners Only)

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Congregate Meal Site \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State and Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Month	# Newsletters	# Incentives
May 2010	____ Congregate Meal Site Participants	The incentive for April through June is an orange squeeze ball. If you did not receive these in April, please indicate how many are needed _____

Return to: Marilyn Jones,  
IDPH, Lucas Building, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor,  
321 E. 12<sup>th</sup> Street,  
Des Moines, IA 50319

or by FAX 515-281-4913. For questions, call Marilyn at 800-532-1579 or 515-281-6047.



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## Your Answers

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Heart disease & stroke

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Green leafy & cruciferous veggies;  
citrus fruits

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detergent

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Health professional

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## Chef Charles Says...

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This material was funded by the Iowa Nutrition Network and USDA's SNAP. SNAP provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. Food assistance can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more about Iowa's Food Assistance Program, contact the local Iowa Department of Human Services office serving the county where you live, or call toll-free at 1-877-937-3663.

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