

Facilitator's Guide



FRESH
CONVERSATIONS



Volume 8, Issue 8

Let's keep the blood flowing!

Background Information (optional):

- [Mayo Clinic - Anemia](#)
- [Vitamin K](#)
- [Health Benefits of Kale](#)
- [Harvard - Vitamin K](#)
- [What's Blood?](#)

Behavior Goals

1. Participants will understand what nutrients affect blood health and what dietary sources to find those nutrients.
2. Participants will understand anemia and be able to voice some signs and symptoms.
3. Participants will understand the importance of stretching in your exercise routine.

Meeting Preparation:

1. Review the newsletter. Send questions or concerns to your coordinator.
2. Review the background resources (website links are provided above).
3. Choose one of the recipe options. Make the recipe at least once before the meeting. Write down helpful hints for the group. If virtual, have ideas on what to share about the recipe you tried.
4. Determine how to transport and taste featured food tasting.

Continued on page 2

The suggested wording for the presentation is in regular font and the facilitator directions are in ***bold, dark red italic.***

It's best not to read the presentation, but to use your own words, staying close to the meaning.

Meeting Preparation:

5. If the meeting is virtual, prepare ideas for how to engage participants in the recipe making process.
 - a. Prepare a grocery list for the recipe chosen that can be sent with newsletter for participants to purchase
 - b. Demonstrate recipe on video and direct participants to the recipe in the newsletter.
 - c. If conference call: create a conversation about the recipe: serving size, freezing instructions, tips, discussion on ingredients, nutrition etc.

Props:

1. Paper and Pen for participants
2. Small papers with each letter (A-Z) - one letter will be given to each group for the game

Conversation

Welcome to Fresh Conversations! At our last meeting, we discussed the importance of a variety of colors of fruits and vegetables in your diet. Did anyone try any new produce in an effort to get variety in your diet?

Allow time for participants to share anything they tried.

Were there any colors of fruits and vegetables that you decided you didn't get enough of in your diet and maybe you focused specifically on?

Allow time for participants to answer.

Introduction

Today, we are going to talk about blood health. In the nutrition world, we talk a lot about gut health, immune health, and brain health, to name a few. But we don't talk about the health of our blood very often. We are going to get a little deeper into some of the nutrients that affect our blood and also some of the health conditions that may affect it as well. Are there any nutrients that you are familiar with that may affect your blood health?

Examples would include iron, vitamin K, folate, B vitamins, vitamin C

Discussion

Let's talk about our blood a little more in depth first. We know everybody's blood is red but they are not all created the same. Let's test you first on some fun facts.

Ask participants to hold up fingers: 1, 2, 3 or 4

1. What is the universal blood type (i.e. it can be given to all people, no matter their blood type).

1. Type O-

2. Type AB+

3. Type B+

4. Type O+

2. What another term for high blood pressure?

1. Coronary Artery Disease

2. Hypertension

3. Anemia

4. Arrhythmia

3. Negative blood types are less common in the U.S, true or false?

1. True

2. False

1. About 18% of the U.S. population has a negative blood type. (According to the Oklahoma Blood Institute).

4. How many lives could 1 pint of blood save?

1. 10

2. 1

3. 3

4. 6

5. What is the lab test called that doctors may perform to check you for anemia?

1. Hemoglobin

2. Vitamin K

3. Glucose

4. TSH

Blood transports oxygen and nutrients to all the parts of our body so it can continue working properly. There are two types of blood vessels that carry blood throughout our bodies: 1. Arteries - 2. Veins. Arteries carry oxygenated blood (blood that has gotten oxygen from the lungs) from the heart to the rest of the body. Blood then travels back to the heart and lungs so it can get more oxygen to send back to the body via the veins.

Just like other organs in your body, your blood requires the right nutrients to do its job efficiently. One of those nutrients that you get from your diet is iron. Low blood levels of iron are common in older adults. When your blood iron levels are low, it may lead to a condition called anemia. Let's talk about the signs and symptoms of anemia first.

Ask participants for volunteers to read the signs and symptoms on the second page.

Be sure to always talk with your provider if you are experiencing any of these symptoms.

So if anemia can occur from a lack of iron in your diet, let's talk about where you can find iron in foods. First, let's split up into groups of 2 or 3. Each group will have one letter. Your group will be tasked with finding two foods that are high in iron that start with that letter. Think of your favorite recipes including these ingredients as well. Refer to page 2-3 for more information regarding dietary sources of iron. Brand names can count as well.

Give time for participants to write down some examples.

Let's go around and talk about your answers.

Allow each group time to present. Ask each group if the food they choose was heme or nonheme. Remind participants that heme iron is absorbed more efficiently but both are important, especially when paired together. You could play another round of this game with different letters.

Let's play the same thing with Vitamin K. In your small groups, I will assign you a different letter to think of 1 food that contains Vitamin K. Think of your favorite recipe that includes this ingredient as well.

Give time for participants to write down some examples.

Let's go around and talk about your answers.

Allow each group time to present.

Fortified foods may sometimes be good sources of certain essential vitamins and minerals. Iron is a common nutrient that is included in fortified foods, while Vitamin K is not. At previous meetings, we have discussed that the cooking process (or "processing") may change nutrient levels, depending on the process used and time spent. Along the same lines, cooking does affect nutrient levels. It's difficult to state which cooking methods change which nutrient levels but the best advice is to always eat a varied diet of raw and cooked fruits and vegetables. Overall, this helps to ensure your diet is well balanced and the most nutritious.

Physical Activity:

Last month we talked about strength training. Did anyone watch and try Iowa State University Extension and Outreach's beginner strength-training session? Something else?

Ask participants to share how they incorporated strength training into their lives during the last few weeks. Facilitator should be prepared to talk about how they tried the video or tried strength training.

The final component of physical fitness after cardiovascular physical activity and strength training is flexibility. Flexibility is really important as we age, but it is often forgotten because it doesn't produce the more noticeable results of strength training or the physical response (increased heart rate, feel-good endorphins being released) of cardiovascular activities.

Research has shown that stretching can help improve flexibility and the range of motion of your joints. When you stretch you are bringing the blood flow to your muscles, and helping them lengthen. You may be thinking, I'm too old to stretch now, it won't do me any good. But that's not true! Even though you have lost some of your range of motion over the years, you can get it back!

When incorporating flexibility into your routine, it is important to warm up a little first. Stretching cold muscles can cause more harm than good. Walk around for a few minutes or do some dynamic movements, anything to get the blood flowing in your body. Just like strength training, you want to involve all of the major muscle groups in your body.

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach has two videos on stretching. One is about chair stretches, and the other focuses on the upper body.

<https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/video-category/physical-activity/>

Yoga and tai chi are something else that might be coming to your mind when you think about flexibility. We talked about yoga a little a couple of months ago when we discussed low-impact activity. Has anyone tried yoga or tai chi before?

Ask a couple of participants to share their experiences.

Yoga and tai chi can be especially helpful at maintaining our balance as we age. Both have gotten very popular over the last 10 or so years. Yoga is known for bringing together the mind and the body. It has been proven to decrease stress and anxiety, and studies suggest it can reduce inflammation and chronic pain. Tai chi can improve your balance, posture, flexibility and strength. Over time tai chi strengthens your muscles and improves your balance which can reduce the risk of falling.

Tasting Activities:

1. Savory Greens (preferred):

- a. For a sweeter or milder flavor, cook collards, swiss chard, bok choy and spinach.
- b. For a more peppery flavor, choose arugula, kale and mustard greens.
- c. When shopping for greens in the store, look for ones with fresh full leaves. Avoid ones that have brown, yellow, spotted, wilted or slimy leaves.
- d. Store greens in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for two to five days.
- e. Wash greens thoroughly before use.
- f. Cut stems from leafy green immediately before cooking.
- g. Idea to show pictures of different types of greens to give a visual for those that may not have tried many types.
- h. Purchasing locally grown greens may taste fresher than store bought.
- i. You can experiment using different types of seasonings that you may like.

2. Orange Dressing with Fruit and Greens

- a. Iron is absorbed better with a Vitamin C containing food, for example pairing spinach with oranges in this salad.
- b. A store bought salad dressing could also be substituted but it is important to look at the label. Most salad dressings marketed as “fat free” have an increased amount of added sugar.
- c. If you are looking to reduce your sugar intake and would like to substitute an alternative sweetener, be sure to look at the conversion as they are typically not 1:1 ratios. For example - 1 Tbls. white sugar may equal ½ Tbls. of an alternative sweetener.
- d. This would be a great side dish with a steak or grilled chicken. To make it a “MyPlate” meal, add a side of cottage cheese and a whole grain roll.

Take Action

This month set aside some time to add flexibility into your routine. Try an extension video or give yoga at home or in the park a try!

This month try to pair one food that is high in iron with a Vitamin C containing food to increase absorption.