



Manager's Corner

Dietary Fiber

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PURPOSE

Improve the operation of child nutrition programs through research, education and training, and information dissemination.

VISION

Lead the nation in providing research, education, and resources to promote excellence in child nutrition programs.

MISSION

Provide relevant research-based information and services that advance the continuous improvement of child nutrition programs.

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Professional Standards

GENERAL NUTRITION – 1300

Employee will be able to understand the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, USDA's food guidance system concepts, and general nutrition principles.

1310 – Dietary Guidelines

Relate the Dietary Guidelines and USDA's food guidance system (such as MyPlate) concepts to the goals of school nutrition programs.

1320 – General Nutrition

Understand general nutrition concepts that relate to school meals, such as whole grains, sodium, etc.

Introduction

Manager's Corner: Dietary Fiber is designed to empower managers to use in training their staff. Each lesson is roughly 15 minutes. This lesson plan contains:

- Learning objective
- Statement explaining the importance of the topic
- List of materials
- Instructions on how to present the information
- Questions to ask staff
- An activity to strengthen or refresh the knowledge of the staff

Lesson Overview

Instructions for lesson:

- Review the lesson objective and background information.
- Review why it is important.
- Ask staff the questions.
- Facilitate the activity outlined.
- Provide time for staff to ask questions.

Objective: Define dietary fiber and identify food sources and nutrition benefits of dietary fiber.

Background information: Dietary fiber is the part of plants that the human body cannot absorb during digestion; instead, it passes through the intestines and out of the body. There are two different types of fiber called soluble and insoluble fibers. Both work to help clean out the digestive system. Think of eating fiber like brushing your teeth, you need both the toothbrush and toothpaste. Soluble fiber absorbs water and turns into a gel-like substance (the toothpaste) that slows down the digestion; whereas, insoluble fiber does not break down. The fiber stays intact and helps to move materials through the system (the bristles on a toothbrush). Each type of fiber has a role in digestion and provides different health benefits, which is why we need to eat varieties of fiber.

Food sources that are high in fiber include fruits, vegetables, whole grain-rich foods, and meat alternates such as beans, peas, or lentils. Dietary fiber may help to reduce cholesterol and may reduce heart attack, obesity, and type 2 diabetes. Fiber can also help maintain a regular digestive system and is good for the health of your colon and intestines.

Why it is important: It is important for individuals to get the required amount of dietary fiber every day. Eating a healthy amount of dietary fiber every day can help to prevent many digestive issues and certain types of cancer.

Questions for Staff

- **What is dietary fiber?**

Answer: Part of plants that the human body cannot absorb in digestion.

- **What are food sources of dietary fiber, and what can school nutrition staff do to promote the benefits of dietary fiber?**

Answer: Foods that are high in fiber include fruits, vegetables, whole grain-rich foods, and meat alternates such as beans, peas, or lentils. Hang posters around the cafeteria that promote the benefits of dietary fiber. They can also find ways to make foods with fiber taste and look appetizing to children.

- **What are the benefits of eating foods with dietary fiber?**

Answer: Foods that contain a good amount of dietary fiber may help to reduce cholesterol and may reduce heart attack, obesity, and type 2 diabetes. Fiber can also help maintain a regular digestive system, prevent digestive issues, and is good for the health of your colon and intestines. Fiber-containing foods can help to provide a feeling of fullness with fewer calories.

Please note: The answers provided are only examples and are not an inclusive list of possible responses.

Activity: Menu Item Suggestions

Activity materials included in this document:

- **Menu Item Suggestions**
- **Menu Item Suggestions Answer Key**

Materials provided by the school nutrition program:

- Copies of handouts
- Writing utensils

Activity Instructions:

- Print the handouts and worksheets.
- Ask staff to complete the **Menu Item Suggestions** activity.
- At the conclusion of the activity, review the **Menu Item Suggestions Answer Key**.

Menu Item Suggestions

Instructions: Write your response to the questions below, and have an open dialogue with your staff.

What are some menu items that incorporate dietary fiber in school meals?

List some foods on the school's menu that are higher in dietary fiber.

What are some health benefits these recipes provide to our students?

Menu Item Suggestions Answer Key

Instructions: Write your response to the questions below, and have an open dialogue with your staff.

What are some menu items that incorporate dietary fiber in school meals?

Example responses:

- Fruits (Apples, Bananas, Raspberries, Pears)
- Vegetables (Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, Carrots, Turnip Greens)
- Whole Grains (Brown Rice, Oatmeal, Quinoa, Whole Wheat Pasta)
- Meat Alternates (Beans, Peas, Lentils)

List some foods on the school's menu that are higher in dietary fiber.

Answers will be subjective and may vary from school to school.

What are some health benefits these recipes provide to our students?

Answers will be subjective.

- help maintain a regular digestive system
- provide a feeling of fullness with fewer calories

Please note: The answers provided are only examples and are not an inclusive list of possible responses.

References

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