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Label Power [Facilitator's Guide]

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Label Power

Lesson Goals:

After teaching the lesson, participants will:

1. Demonstrate how to find the following information on food containers
 - Nutrition Facts
 - Ingredients list
 - Handling instructions
 - Net Weight
2. Use the Nutrition Facts to identify
 - Serving Size
 - Number of servings in the container
 - Amounts of nutrients per serving
3. Use the list of ingredients to identify which are present in the greatest amounts.
4. Demonstrate how to match label claims with health concerns.
5. Identify at least three nutrients and the disease(s) each nutrient can help prevent.
6. Use the % Daily Value to describe a product as having a low, medium or high amount of a nutrient.
7. Identify one vitamin and one mineral to look for on the Nutrition Facts label.

Before Teaching the Lesson

1. Read carefully:
 - Label Power (NEP 209)
 - Label Claims (NEP 209A)
 - Nutrition Facts Label (NEP 209B)
2. Check the homemaker's 24-Hour Food Recall Records. Is the diet adequate in vitamins A and C? Is the diet adequate in fiber, and the minerals calcium and iron? Is the diet high in sodium or fat?
3. Save food labels and empty packages to illustrate product labeling.
4. Collect any teaching aids you will need to teach the lesson.
5. Plan how you will teach the lesson.

Teaching Tools

For the Homemaker:

- *Label Power* (NEP 209)
- *Label Claims* (NEP 209A)
- *Nutrition Facts Label* (NEP 209B)
- Food labels, cans and packages

- Index cards prepared for suggested Small Group Exercise #1
- PowerPoint® presentation *Label Power* or flip chart
- Nutrition Facts Label poster

For Youth:

- *Organwise*—"How to Be Smart from the Inside Out"
- "Basic Training for Better Health"
- "Undercover Health Agents"
- "Healthy Heart Challenge"

Lesson Points to Stress

Label Power (NEP-209)

1. The food label is an important tool for comparing different brands of the same product and evaluating nutrition content. The label can help you pick the best buy.
2. By law, a food container must include the product name, the Nutrition Facts, an ingredient list, health claims, handling instructions, the manufacturer's name and address and the product's weight.
3. To learn the nutrient content of a food, look at the Nutrition Facts. These include very basic information based on a single serving. The serving size is the very first item listed on the Nutrition Facts.
4. The number of servings per container will help you determine how many containers to buy. Serving size is based on the amount most people actually eat.
5. Next on the Nutrition Facts are calories for one serving and calories from fat. This allows you to quickly figure out if the product is high, medium or low in fat. (A Daily Value of 5 percent or less is "low" and 20 percent or more is "high" for a nutrient.)
6. The next five nutrients are listed to help you decide if this product fits your personal diet. Because these are the nutrients that most Americans eat too much of, we should limit our intake of total fat, saturated fat, trans- fat, cholesterol and sodium. Eating too much of these nutrients may increase your risk of certain chronic diseases, such as heart disease, high blood pressure or some cancers.

7. Also listed in the Nutrition Facts label are dietary fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium and iron. Most Americans do not get enough of these nutrients in their diets. Eating enough of these nutrients can improve health and help reduce the risk of some diseases and conditions. Values for these nutrients are expressed in both weights and as a percentage of the daily value (DV), based on a 2,000 calorie diet. It is important to remember that personal calorie needs may be greater or less than 2,000 calories.
8. Remember, the Nutrition Facts label can be used not only to help limit those nutrients you want to cut back on but also to increase those nutrients you need to consume in greater amounts.
9. The ingredient list tells you what is in the product. Ingredients are listed in order from the most to the least that are present by weight. That means that the first ingredient is in the greatest quantity and the last ingredient is present in the smallest amount.

Label Claims (NEP-209A)

1. Under the label law, products may state claims about the foods. Examples of such claims are "light," "low-fat" or "low-sodium." These claims may only be used if the product meets strict government standards.
2. Claims can be divided into three categories: health claims, nutrient claims and function claims. Health claims describe a relationship between a nutrient and a disease or health-related condition. A food must meet certain nutrient levels to make a health claim. An example of this would be: "High in calcium. May help prevent osteoporosis." A nutrient claim describes the level of a nutrient in the food using terms such as "free," "high" or "low." An example of this would be "Low-Fat Milk."
3. The level of a nutrient in one food can be compared to that in another food using terms such as: "reduced," "more" and "light." "Light" means a product contains 25 percent fewer calories than the regular product. An example of this would be "light wheat bread" contains 25 percent fewer calories than regular wheat bread. "Reduced" means a product contains 25 percent less of a nutrient than the regular product.
4. Function claims refer to the role of a nutrient in the body. An example of this would be: "Low fat diets, rich in fiber containing grain products, fruits and vegetables may reduce the risk of some types of cancer."
5. Note that label claims are based on a standard serving size for the given food.

Nutrition Facts (NEP-209B)

1. People look at food labels for different reasons. Some people need to limit the amount they consume of certain nutrients and some need to consume more amounts of certain nutrients. But, whatever the reason, the first place to start when you look at the Nutrition Facts, is the Serving Size and Servings per Container. The information on the label is for one serving of the food.
2. Daily Values (DV) are recommended amounts of various nutrients to include in your diet every day.
3. Use the % Daily Value to decide if the food provides a small, medium or high percentage of your total day's needs. A Daily Value of 5 percent or less means the food is low in that nutrient, 20 percent or more DV means it contains high amounts.
4. Vitamins A and C and the minerals calcium and iron are very important for a healthy diet. Unfortunately, many Americans do not get enough of these. This is why they must be listed on the label to help make you aware of good sources of these nutrients.

Ideas for Teaching the Lesson

1. Before teaching the lesson, review what you taught the participants on your last visit.
 - What information has she used?
 - What new things has she tried?
2. Give the participant an empty food container.
 - a) Ask her to find as many of the following as she can.
 - ingredient list
 - net weight
 - handling instructions
 - Nutrition Facts
 - any health claims
 - b) Ask them to identify:
 - size of a single serving
 - number of servings in the container
 - calories in a serving
 - calories from fat
 - c) Ask them to tell you if the product is high, low or medium in:
 - fat
 - cholesterol
 - sodium
 - vitamin A
 - vitamin C
 - calcium
 - iron
 - d) If the label contains health claims, ask the participant what they are and how the information is to be used.

3. Show the homemaker two or three different brands of a food product. Make sure each package is labeled with the item's price. Ask her to compare the ingredients lists of both products and determine which product is:
 - healthiest
 - most economical
 - highest quality
4. Give the homemaker a large selection of food containers. Ask her to find a product that:
 - has water listed as one of its top two ingredients
 - has sugar (or a form of added sugar) listed as one of its top two ingredients
 - has 50 percent or more of the Daily Value for vitamin C in one serving
 - has 50 percent or more of the Daily Value for vitamin A in one serving
 - has 10 percent or more of the Daily Value for iron in one serving
 - has 10 percent or more of the Daily Value for calcium in one serving
 - has 10 percent or more of the Daily Value for fiber in one serving
 - is low in total fat
 - is low in saturated fat
 - is low in transfat

The following list should aid in discussing specific nutrients and in identifying products containing the nutrients being discussed.

Calories: Fat contains more calories per gram than carbohydrate or protein, so foods high in fat are likely to be high in calories. Examples include butter, margarine, cream, pastries, nuts, oil-based dressings, sausages, and luncheon meats.

Saturated Fat: Foods high in saturated fat include:

- Fatty meats, such as sausages, luncheon meats and prime cuts of meat
- Dairy products with high fat content such as cream, cream cheese, and butter
- Foods with fat that is solid at room temperature

Trans Fat: Foods high in trans fats include:

- Foods made with hydrogenated vegetable oils found in shortening and margarine, such as biscuits, pie crusts and other pastries
- Foods fried in shortenings such as doughnuts or fried chicken

Total Fat: Includes sources of saturated fat, trans fat, and unsaturated fat. Sources of unsaturated fat include vegetable oils such as corn oil, sunflower oil, soybean oil, safflower oil, and olive oil.

Cholesterol: Cholesterol is found in animal products such as meat, poultry, egg yolks, dairy products, and food items made with animal fat such as pastries made with lard.

Sodium: Sodium is found in many condiments such as catsup, relishes, soy sauce, barbecue sauce, or dressings. Cured and pickled foods are high in sodium. (Ham, sausages, bacon, hotdogs, dried beef, sauerkraut, pickles) Prepared foods such as canned soups or soup mixes, gravy mixes, and most commercial seasoning mixes are high in sodium. Other sources of sodium include soft drinks and medications.

Carbohydrates: Grains, fruits, vegetables and dairy products all contain carbohydrates.

Dietary Fiber: The best sources of dietary fiber are whole grains, bran, fruits and vegetables with seeds, skins and pulpy stems and membranes.

Sugars: Many foods contain naturally occurring sugars, such as lactose in milk or fructose in fruit. Foods highest in sugars usually contain added sugars such as corn syrup, high fructose corn syrup, or sucrose (sugar). Examples of foods containing added sugars are soft drinks, cookies, candies, breakfast pastries, or cakes.

Protein: High quality protein is found in animal products such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and dairy products. Soy beans and nuts also provide high quality protein. Protein is also found in grain products and vegetables.

Vitamins and Minerals:

Vitamin A: Vitamin A is found in orange fruits and vegetables such as pumpkin, sweet potatoes, carrots, peaches, and cantaloupe. Dark green vegetables such as spinach, collard greens, mustard greens, and broccoli are also high in vitamin A.

Vitamin C: Citrus fruits (oranges, grapefruit, tangerines) are high in vitamin C. Other good sources include Brussels sprouts, strawberries, broccoli, collard and mustard greens, cauliflower, and cantaloupe. Many foods are fortified with vitamin C.

Calcium: The best sources of calcium are dairy products such as milk and yogurt. Canned fish with bones (sardines and salmon) are also good sources. Some fruits and vegetables contain calcium, but even the best plant sources contain only half as much calcium as dairy products. (Collard greens, spinach, and mustard greens are the best plant sources of calcium.)

Iron: Foods that rank high in iron content are oysters, beef liver, enriched bran flakes, beef heart, chipped beef, lean beef roast, prune juice, sardines, dried beans, and spinach.

Ideas for Teaching Small Groups

1. Before the group meeting, mark index cards with one of the following:
 - ingredient list
 - net weight
 - handling instructions
 - Nutrition Facts
 - health claims
 - calories
 - servings (size and number in the package)
 - vitamins
 - minerals
 - % Daily Value

Give one index card to each participant. Also, distribute three or more identical food containers for the group to read. Ask the participants to respond when you call out the information on the index card. Example: Who has the card, "ingredient list"?

Jane Smith responds. Ask her to find the ingredient list on the product and read it to the group. Discuss the information and what it means. Continue to do this for each index card title.

2. Use the Nutrition Facts Label poster to exhibit different parts of the nutrition facts label.
3. Refer to the previous section "Ideas for Teaching the Lesson" for more ideas.

How to Tell What the Homemaker(s) Learned

Immediately following the lesson:

- Ask the homemaker how she will use the ingredient list to help her choose between brands.
- Give the homemaker a food label. Ask her to find the various points of information such as net weight, ingredients list and handling instructions.
- Give the homemaker a food label. Ask her to use the Nutrition Facts to tell you serving size, calories, and if the product is high, medium or low in fat.
- Give the homemaker a package containing one or more descriptors, such as "light," "fat-free," or "cholesterol free." Ask her to tell you what the claim means or why a person might buy that product over a similar one that has no health claims.

At a later visit:

- Ask the homemaker if she has changed any of her shopping habits. If yes, what did she change? Is the change a result of what you mentioned during your lesson?
- Ask the homemaker to describe one way she either saved money or bought a better quality food product as a result of comparing ingredients.
- In the future, check the homemaker's 24-Hour Food Recall Records to see if she is making more nutritious food choices than before.

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