

Move Out the Fads



(Teacher's Guide)

Share with participants: ***"If a study is published regarding nutrition and health, the television news and the newspaper will usually announce the results of the study."***

Nutrition and health information is big news these days on radio, TV and in the press. Some media have regular shows devoted to nutrition and health information. People are very interested in this topic, including many elderly who are very health conscious. Not everything you read or hear about nutrition and health is true. Some sources are promoting questionable dietary supplements and weight-loss plans. A person who does not have training in nutrition often has a very difficult time separating fact from fiction.

Ask participants: ***"What do you know about vitamin supplements and weight-loss programs?"***

- Dietary supplements are a fast growing industry. In 1996 alone, 6.4 billion dollar's worth of dietary supplements were sold in this country. More than 50 % of the adult U.S. population uses dietary supplements. Some who are taking them do not need them.
- Most healthy people can get all the nutrients they need for good health from a varied, nutritious diet patterned after the Food Guide Pyramid. However, some people may need a nutritional supplement, particularly women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, infants, people on very low-calorie diets, and strict vegetarians.
- Before taking a dietary supplement seek the counsel of a doctor, dietitian or nutritionist. Never self prescribe a vitamin or mineral supplement because some can be harmful to your health. Nutritional supplements may complement foods but they cannot replace healthy diets.

- Beware of any diet plans where magical or miraculous results are promised without any time or effort required on your part. Remember that a sound, sensible health plan includes physical activity and enough nutritious food to get all needed nutrients.
- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not test dietary supplements or approve them.

Ask participants: ***"How might you become better able to recognize sound health information?"***

(Additional information, entitled "Is It True?", is on your last page of this section. It is to be used for discussion purposes ONLY. Please discuss information with participants but DO NOT use it as a handout.)

- 1 Cut out ads for dietary supplements, and with the help of a University of Illinois Extension worker, evaluate claims that are made.
- 2 Have several of your friends look at a popular diet. Discuss the diet. Determine if it is truthful.
- 3 Identify sources of reliable health information. Compare the sources.
- 4 Ask your friends where they get their nutrition and health information. Talk about whether these are reliable sources.
- 5 Talk to someone who has been on fad diets. Have that person tell you about their experiences. Was that person successful on the fad diet(s)?
- 6 Talk to someone who has been successful in achieving a healthier diet or becoming more active. Ask that person to identify the key(s) to their success.

Ask participants: ***"What are some goals you could write to help you practice what you have learned?"***

- ❖ Set a goal to identify sources of reliable health information and use these sources (Ex. University of Illinois Extension, Good Housekeeping, Latina, Essence).
- ❖ Set a goal to improve your buying habits as the result of being a more critical consumer.

- ❖ Set a goal to read advertisements for dietary supplements and diet plans and identify questionable claims.

Discuss setting goals, and then ask participants to write two goals for themselves.

Set two goals for yourself:

1. _____

2. _____



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