

Effective and Enjoyable Ways to Learn about Fruits & Veggies

Three focus group interviews were conducted in 1996 with two groups of participants in the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program and one group of Head Start moms – 32 people in all. Questions focused on how they do (and do not) want to learn. We asked about barriers to eating fruits and vegetables and how Project FRESH (Farm Resources Expanding and Supporting Health) could help them overcome those obstacles.

More importantly, we asked for them which types of materials, messages, and methods Project FRESH instructors could/should use that would be interesting and effective for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) clients. Participants graded each method using a scale ranging from A+ (12) to E (0). The average grade for each method is provided followed by the ranking for the “top 10” methods.

What we learned ...

Enjoyable and effective ways to learn include: (See results for specific ratings)

- Taste Testing
- Having/using a magnetized memo board on their refrigerator
- Recipes in booklet form (single sheets are too easy to lose)
- A calendar with recipes and tips for using fruits/veggies
- Useful items with the “Fruits and Veggies – More Matters” message such as a coffee mug for them, a juice cup for their child(ren), or a tote bag
- A refrigerator magnet with a “Fruits and Veggies – More Matters” reminder
- A coloring book (about fruits and veggies) or a story book to take home
- Games to play in a group setting
- Food demonstration
- Group discussion

Least Enjoyable/effective ways to learn (from the choices on our checklist)

- Video tapes (in group sessions, in a waiting room, or to take home)
- Items worn by an instructor (t-shirt or pin)
- Brochures (if used, they should be discussed, not just handed out)
- Presentation/lecture by instructor
- Poster to take home

Suggestions for Project FRESH sessions: People want to be involved – they like to taste food and receive recipes to try new ways to using fruit and veggies at home. They like “gifts” with positive messages (calendars, memo pad or shopping list, magnets). And they like things they can use with their kids (coloring or story books, songs, cups). Methods where they are passive, rather than active, learners – like videotapes, handouts, or presentations without discussion or food activities – are not enjoyable or effective according to the experts (low-income clients!)

Ways to Learn about Eating More Fruits & Veggies

Method:	Effective?	Enjoyable?
Calendar (to take home)	A- (1)	A- (4)
Taste Testing	A- (1)	A- (1)
Magnetic memo board for the fridge	A- (2)	A- (2)
Food demonstration that you watch	B+ (3)	B
Coloring book to use at home w/ kids	B+ (4)	B+ (4)
Recipes (booklet)	B (5)	A- (3)
Refrigerator magnet	B (5)	B+ (6)
Juice cup for young children	B (6)	B+ (5)
Storybook to read to kids at home	B (7)	B (10)
Recipes (single sheets)	B (8)	B-
Group Discussion	B (9)	B
Coffee/drink mug	B- (10)	B+ (5)
Game (played in a group)	B-	B (8)
Lunch bags	B-	B-
F/V songs to sing with/to your kids	B-	B-
Tote bag	C+	B (9)
Poster displayed in a group session	C+	C+
Bookmark/"tips" card	C+	C
Brochures/handout (discussed)	C+	C
Presentation/lecture	C+	C
Presentation + flipchart	C+	C
Poster to take home	C	C+
Videotape used in a group session	C	C-
T-shirt worn by an instructor	C-	C
Videotape playing in a waiting room	C-	C-
Brochures or handouts (discussed)	C-	C-
Videotape to take home and watch	D+	D+
Pin worn by instructor	D+	D+
Pin given to you to wear	D+	D+

Other approaches: Effective speaker (4), coloring information picture book, creative cooking methods for fruits and veggies, grocery list, memo pad, post-it pad, folder to keep information in, and tear-off notepad.