



## MONEY-SAVER ALERT: LET'S TAC(O) ABOUT WASTED FOOD *60-minute lesson*

### GOAL

Help caregivers use all of the food available to them to save money and maximize household food resources.

### OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Discuss how to use all the food that you have (or have access to).
- ✓ Practice using 'hard-to-use' ingredients in a variety of recipes.
- ✓ Discuss how to save foods that you can't use right away.
- ✓ Discuss how to limit food waste with children while still introducing new foods.

### KEY MESSAGES

- ✓ The most expensive food is the food we waste. Plan to use up all the ingredients you have access to.
- ✓ Use your freezer to save money by throwing less food away.
- ✓ To reduce kids' food waste, let kids serve themselves and only offer 'tastes' of new foods.

### MATERIALS

Flip chart or white board • Markers/pens • Name tags • Ingredients and equipment for your chosen recipes • Materials for kids' activity (if using - optional)

### KIDS' ACTIVITY OPTIONS

**We have provided a booklet of activities that can be used with kids.** The following are suggestions for specific activities that may be complementary to what caregivers are learning in this lesson. **You are not limited to this list** – feel free to use whatever activities are most appropriate for your situation.

Note that some activities are written for the whole family, but can be easily modified for an activity with only kids.

- For younger kids:
  - We Eat Tops and Bottoms, page 10
  - Your Veggies Your Way, page 3
  - Any of the coloring sheets pages 28-38
- For older kids:
  - Filling Up My Plate, page I-53
  - Putting Whole Grains to the Test, page I-45
  - Activity Ball Toss, page I-60

## CAREGIVER HANDOUTS

We have provided a comprehensive set of handouts for each lesson that can be 1) used as references for the instructor to prepare for class 2) referenced verbally and/or visually during class to guide discussion 3) provided as take-homes for caregivers to reinforce what they learned in class and encourage further learning. **You are NOT required to provide all of these handouts as take-homes** (though you may if you wish). Feel free to pick and choose which you feel are most helpful and appropriate. However, we ask that **at a minimum you provide a printed copy of the recipe(s) you prepared in class, as well as the Making It Work at Home handout.**

Check off the handouts you plan to reference during class

- Sub It In
- Vary Your Fruits and Veggies
- Making Recipes Work for You
- Veggies Three Ways
- Chill Out
- Storing Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
- Freezing Fruits and Veggies
- Bean Basics
- Soups Made Simple
- Casseroles: An Easy, Make-ahead Meal
- Cook It Up Quick
- Packaged Food Makeover
- Spice It Up
- Make Your Own Fruit Smoothies
- Delicious Dips and Spreads
- Making it Work at Home**



**Prep for Success:** Yogurt and black beans are common ingredients that caregivers report not using all of or not selecting at the store or food pantry. **If yogurt and black beans are not ingredients that the caregivers you serve struggle to use, you may select recipes that feature a different hard-to-use ingredient as needed.** For example, if you are a WIC clinic and clients in your area often fail to redeem a certain item, select recipes that focus on that item.

## RECIPE OPTIONS

Choose **3 recipes that show different ways to use up the same hard-to-use ingredient**, such as black beans or yogurt.. Plan to prepare 1-2 of the recipes for hands on cooking and prepare the other 1-2 recipes in advance for tasting alongside the class-prepared recipes. You may use other recipes if you wish – see [CookingMatters.org/recipes](http://CookingMatters.org/recipes) for more ideas. If you are not using a Cooking Matters recipe, please be sure it contains only ingredients that are affordable and accessible for low-income caregivers, does not require fancy cooking tools, and follows healthy eating guidelines.

Black Bean Ideas: Use any recipes that incorporate black beans as an ingredient.			
Recipe	Prep and Cook Time	Time Saving Tips	Talking Points
<a href="#">Black Bean Brownies</a>	Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 25- 30 minutes	Prepare in advance if used for tasting.	<p>"This recipe is a great way to utilize beans for dessert. They can easily be made with canned beans or dried beans that you have cooked ahead of time."</p> <p>"With this snack, your kids are getting a boost of fiber and protein while also eating a treat. Talk about bang for your buck!"</p>

Recipe	Prep and Cook Time	Time Saving Tips	Talking Points
<a href="#">Black Bean and Vegetable Quesadillas</a>	Prep Time: 25 minutes Cook Time: 20 minutes	Prepare in advance if used for tasting.	<p>"Substitute frozen spinach for fresh to save money, or if you won't use up the fresh spinach in other ways."</p> <p>"Use any veggies you like. Quesadillas are great for throwing in leftover veggies too!"</p>
<a href="#">Southwestern Corn and Black-Eyed Pea Salad</a>	Prep Time: 20 minutes Cook Time: 0 minutes	Prepare in advance if used for tasting.	<p>"Here we are substituting black beans for the black-eyed peas. The flavor profile is still fantastic as black beans pair well with corn."</p> <p>"This salad makes a great side dish and can even be paired with our homemade tortilla chip recipe to be brought to a gathering."</p>
<a href="#">Black Bean Dip from Delicious Dips &amp; Spreads handout</a>	Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 0 minutes	Prepare in advance if used for tasting.	"If you need a break from serving beans as the main dish, or have a child who will not eat the beans in their natural form, a dip provides a unique way to use the beans. As the recipe mentions, you can also add yogurt to this dip which can help utilize any extra plain yogurt you may have in your refrigerator."

**Yogurt Ideas: Use any recipes that incorporate yogurt as an ingredient.**

Recipe	Prep and Cook Time	Time Saving Tips	Talking Points
<a href="#">Honey Mustard, Vegetable, or Fruit Yogurt Dip from Delicious Dips &amp; Spreads Handout</a>	Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 0 minutes	Prepare in advance if used for tasting.	"Kids often like to dip their foods. Using yogurt as the base means you can feel good about them dipping into something nutritious. We use the same yogurt (plain) for each of the dips, but by adding a few other ingredients we can change the flavor dramatically."
<a href="#">Make Your Own Fruit Smoothies handout</a>	Prep time: 10 minutes Cook time: 0 minutes	Prepare in advance if used for tasting.	"A smoothie can be a great meal, especially when you need a quick breakfast for on-the-go. You can add whatever frozen fruits you like, some water, milk, or 100% juice, and even a vegetable like spinach."
<a href="#">Pumpkin Muffins</a>	Prep time: 15 minutes Cook time: 30 minutes	Prepare in advance if used for tasting.	<p>"Not only are these muffins delicious, but they use up some ingredients that can be harder to deal with: canned pumpkin and yogurt. If yogurt is too sour tasting for you or your kids, baking is an excellent way to use it. You can find recipes for pancakes, waffles, and other quick breads that all use yogurt."</p> <p>"You can make a big batch of these muffins and then freeze them for a quick snack or breakfast on the go."</p>
<a href="#">Yogurt Parfaits</a>	Prep time: 10 minutes Cook time: 0 minutes	Prepare in advance if used for tasting.	"This recipe can be used as a breakfast, snack or even dessert. It provides a great way to utilize extra cereal you may have in your pantry. You can use fresh, frozen, or canned fruit in the recipe in order to save money and time or use something that might be wasted otherwise."

## CLASS TIME

### PAPERWORK (5 MINUTES):

As caregivers arrive, have them complete the demographics portion of the participant survey and sign a waiver.

### MAIN COURSE: LESSON TOPIC (50 MINUTES):

#### INTRODUCTION: (5 MINUTES)

1. **Welcome caregivers.** Introduce instructors and any other volunteers or helpers.
2. **Set expectations.** Today is all about maximizing the food that is available to us. Most people want to save money and mostly people feel guilty when they waste food.
3. **Get acquainted.**



*“What are you looking forward to learning in this session?”* Write their responses on flip-chart paper and make an effort to cover as many of their questions as possible.

#### HANDS-ON COOKING AND DISCUSSION (45 MINUTES)

1. **Begin by having caregivers brainstorm a list of foods that are hard to use up.**

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***NOTE:** If you have a helper to lead children, this is a good time to pull kids into a separate activity of your choosing while caregivers continue the discussion. If not, identify a specific cooking task for kids or give them a designated area for independent play.*

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- Start the discussion to get caregivers thinking about the foods they have trouble using.



*“What foods are currently in your fridge, freezer, and/or pantry that you aren’t using? What foods always go bad before you use them up? Don’t forget about the foods you get, or could get, with your WIC voucher, or at your food pantry.”*

- Write answers on a flip chart or white board. Group them by the MyPlate food groups as they are offered (Fruits, Vegetables, Grains, Protein, and Dairy)



*“Why is it that you aren’t using these foods, or choosing them? Thinking specifically about your household, how much money do you think is lost with the food you waste or don’t select?”*

- Write the caregivers’ answers down on flip chart paper. Allow time for the caregivers to reflect and share.
- If no one answers, write an estimated cost next to the foods already on the list, prompting the caregivers for help with your estimate. Tally up the total cost for a hypothetical family over the course of one month.
- Point out that the most expensive food is the food we waste. The dollar amount can really add up, as we’ve seen in this activity.

- Let caregivers know that we will come back to this list at the end of the session to share ideas with each other about using up the foods we often waste.

## 2. Next, have caregivers prepare recipes using the chosen hard-to-use ingredient.

- Have caregivers wash hands using proper technique.
- Introduce today's recipes and point out that we are going to make or taste three different recipes that all feature an ingredient caregivers report often struggling to use up. As you review the recipes together, encourage caregivers to think of recipes as a flexible guide, rather than set in stone. This can help them to use up less familiar or desirable ingredients!

ASK

*"What ingredients in this recipe could you substitute? Where do you see places within the recipe that are just guidelines?"*

- Delegate different recipe steps as needed. Use the talking points associated with each recipe. While caregivers are working, point out that sometimes we waste food because we cannot use it all in the timeframe needed to avoid spoilage.

ASK

*"Does anyone freeze food to avoid waste? What do you freeze?"*

- Highlight smart use of the freezer as an important way to reduce food waste, particularly for quick-to-go-bad foods like breads, herbs, and some produce. Talk about what foods you can freeze and how to safely freeze and defrost different kinds of foods. Refer to the following handouts: Chill Out, Storing Fresh Fruits and Vegetables, and Freezing Fruits and Veggies.
- Point out that making a large batch and freezing part of the meal after preparing it can make for ready-to-eat meals that save you time on a busy night in the future. Just a quick defrost, and you have a meal!
- Transition to discuss another common source of food waste: our kids' plates.

ASK

*"Is kids' wasted food a problem at your house? What tips do you have to cut down on that waste?"*

- Affirm caregiver responses and add to discussion as needed using the following tips:
  - Try offering small portions, one at a time, when introducing a new food. A taste is only the size of a pea! (Remember: kids' tastes change a lot as they grow. Studies have shown that it can take more than 15 times for a kid to taste a new food and actually decide if they like it. Be patient, and don't give up!)
  - Consider using frozen fruits and vegetables for initial tastes. It allows you to take out tiny portions of the new food and keep the rest frozen.
  - Make only the amount you know the rest of the family will actually eat and just offer a taste to start.
  - Allowing kids to serve themselves can create buy-in for kids to try new foods and cut down on waste. Letting kids take what they want means you won't waste the rest (and can freeze it!). If your child tends to overserve themselves, try giving them a smaller plate, use a smaller serving spoon, and remind them they can always come back for more. Put limits on your kids' servings only if necessary.
  - No need to ask your kids for a "clean plate." If kids think they have to eat all of a new food that is served, they often will refuse it. And, we want to teach kids to eat only until they are no longer hungry – setting a "clean plate" as the standard sets kids up to override their internal hunger signals.

### 3. If kids and caregivers have been separated, bring them back together for eating time.

- Set out the food caregivers have prepared in class alongside the food you have prepared in advance. Point out that we are tasting 3 different ways to use up a hard-to-use ingredient, recognizing that not everyone will care for all 3 ways. These are just ideas to get you thinking about ways to use up ingredients in ways you might never have thought of before!



"Do any of these preparation methods for this ingredient surprise you? Which ones? What other ways would you want to try using this ingredient at home? Does anyone have a favorite way they already use this item?"

- As kids and caregivers eat, refer back to the list of hard-to-use foods they brainstormed at the beginning of the lesson.



*"Now that we've had this time together, what other ideas do you have to use up some of these hard-to-use foods?"*

- Point out that if we can make better use of the food we already on hand, we not only save money, but we can also save time by not going out to the store to buy new food.

### CLOSING (5 MINUTES):

- **ENCOURAGE:** Encourage caregivers to choose one thing they learned today that they will commit to trying at home this week. Have them share aloud if they are willing.
- **ASK:** Model mealtime conversation starters between families by asking kids to share with their caregivers their favorite part of today's session, the best food they tried, and/or a food they want to start using more at home.
- **TAKE:** Share handouts for caregivers to take home, as well as any incentive items you are providing. **Caregivers must complete the participant survey questions and return the forms to you before receiving their take-home items.**

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