

# LESSON 6: NUTRITION AND BLOOD PRESSURE

*Recipes for Health*  
*Prepared by Common Threads*

## ABOUT THIS LESSON

In this lesson, participants focus on the connection between sodium, potassium, blood pressure and cardiovascular health. Participants will be able to identify sources of sodium, understand the relationship between sodium and potassium and identify good sources of fiber.

## KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

### Nutrition

- Participants will be able to (PWBAT) identify hidden sources of sodium
- PWBAT identify lower sodium foods by understanding label claims
- PWBAT discuss the relationship between sodium and potassium
- PWBAT identify good sources of fiber

### Culinary

- PWBAT prepare Mediterranean food
- PWBAT use aromatics to flavor food
- PWBAT list several cooking techniques that bring out the flavor of the food
- PWBAT demonstrate safe and accurate knife skills

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Printed recipes for each participant
- Ingredients
- Cooking equipment
  - A food processor is required for this lesson
- [Lesson Canva Slide Deck](#)

## BEFOREHAND

*Steps to successfully set up your classroom for learning:*

- If using dried chickpeas: fill a large bowl or pot with water. Add the chickpeas and soak overnight or for at least 8 hours. Drain the water after soaking and use fresh water before cooking

- Set up the mise en place to organize recipe ingredients so they are ready for participants to use (e.g. wash produce, divide up ingredients for each group)
- Have participants wash their hands

## LESSON PLAN

### *DURATION - 120 minutes*

- 20 min Nutrition (Presented by Registered Dietitian or Nutritionist)
- 75 min Cooking + Cleaning (Conducted by Chef Instructor)
- 15 min Eating + Goal Setting
- 10 min Conclusion

### *MENU - Cuisine Type*

- Falafel
- Whole Wheat Pita Bread
- Mango Lassi

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- The first and most effective way to reduce sodium intake is to limit the consumption of ultra-processed foods (UPF). Manufacturers use high amounts of salt to make foods that are not nutrient dense or flavorful as salt is a flavor enhancer.
- Sneaky sources of sodium: 71% of sodium intake comes from UPF and restaurant-prepared foods. By simply cooking your favorite meal at home, rather than eating out, you will significantly reduce your sodium consumption. Focus on fresh or unprocessed whole foods, rather than ready-to-eat meals at the grocery store.
- When preparing foods at home you should be mindful of the amount of salt required in the recipe and be cognizant of additional salt added at the table from the salt shaker.
- One teaspoon of salt has 2,300mg of sodium. The American Heart Association's recommendation for ideal intake is 1,500mg with a maximum of 2,300mg a day. The average American consumes over 3,400mg, while 9 in 10 children are also eating more than recommended. Sodium is an acquired taste - as you eat less, you crave less.
- Potassium is the perfect partner! Potassium and sodium are antagonists, and are both significant players in heart health. Eating a balanced plate of vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, and fruits will increase potassium and limit sodium intake.

### *INTRODUCTION - 20 MINUTES*

#### Nutrition Presentation

1. Introduce participants to the class topics: relationship between sodium and potassium and how that relates to cardiovascular health
  - Explain how to cut back on sodium intake when preparing foods at home by learning how to flavor foods using various spices, herbs, and cooking techniques such as:

- o Cook pasta, rice, and grains without salt. Alter recipes by cutting the salt in half.
  - o Use techniques such as braising, roasting, sautéing, grilling, and searing will bring out the natural flavor of foods.
  - o Drain and rinse canned vegetables and beans to reduce sodium by up to 40%. Many canned beans and vegetables offer low-sodium versions as well.
  - o Aromatics such as onions, garlic, herbs, spices, and acids (vinegars, citrus) will add craveable flavor to food. Try salt-free spice mixes.
  - o Limit foods that are: pickled, brined, barbecued, cured, smoked, have broth, au jus, soy sauce, miso, or teriyaki sauce.
  - o Limit UPFs as much as possible. If you do need to consume an UPF choose products carefully:
    - o Sodium-free: <5mg per serving & contains no sodium chloride
    - o Very low sodium <35mg per serving
    - o Low sodium <140mg per serving
    - o Reduced (or less) sodium: <25% per serving than original recipe
    - o Light (for sodium-reduced products): “low calorie” or “low fat” & 50% reduced sodium per serving
    - o Light in sodium: <50% per serving
2. Review the nutrition information for today’s meal. The total milligrams of sodium are just over 500mg. Aiming to keep all meals around 500 milligrams of sodium or less will help you reach the target of 1500 mg per day.

**Nutrition Labels:**

Mango Lassi	Falafel	Whole Wheat Pita Bread
<p><b>Nutrition Facts</b> 6 servings per container <b>Serving size</b> 3/4 Cup (151g)</p> <hr/> <p><b>Amount per serving</b> <b>Calories</b> <b>130</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>% Daily Value*</b></p> <p><b>Total Fat</b> 0g 0% Saturated Fat 0g 0% Trans Fat 0g <b>Cholesterol</b> 5mg 2% <b>Sodium</b> 30mg 1% <b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 25g 9% Dietary Fiber 1g 4% Total Sugars 23g Includes 11g Added Sugars 22%</p> <hr/> <p><b>Protein</b> 8g</p> <p>Vitamin D 0mcg 0% Calcium 93mg 8% Iron 0mg 0% Potassium 115mg 2%</p> <p><small>*The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.</small></p>	<p><b>Nutrition Facts</b> servings per container <b>Serving size</b> 3 falafels (227g)</p> <hr/> <p><b>Amount per serving</b> <b>Calories</b> <b>380</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>% Daily Value*</b></p> <p><b>Total Fat</b> 13g 17% Saturated Fat 1g 5% Trans Fat 0g <b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg 0% <b>Sodium</b> 135mg 6% <b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 55g 20% Dietary Fiber 8g 29% Total Sugars 8g Includes 1g Added Sugars 2%</p> <hr/> <p><b>Protein</b> 14g</p> <p>Vitamin D 0mcg 0% Calcium 109mg 8% Iron 4mg 20% Potassium 602mg 15%</p> <p><small>*The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.</small></p>	<p><b>Nutrition Facts</b> 6 servings per container <b>Serving size</b> 1 round of pita (114g)</p> <hr/> <p><b>Amount per serving</b> <b>Calories</b> <b>260</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>% Daily Value*</b></p> <p><b>Total Fat</b> 2g 3% Saturated Fat 0g 0% Trans Fat 0g <b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg 0% <b>Sodium</b> 200mg 9% <b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 54g 20% Dietary Fiber 5g 18% Total Sugars 2g Includes 1g Added Sugars 2%</p> <hr/> <p><b>Protein</b> 9g</p> <p>Vitamin D 0mcg 0% Calcium 20mg 2% Iron 3mg 15% Potassium 184mg 4%</p> <p><small>*The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.</small></p>

<i>For one serving of each recipe</i>	
<i>Calories</i>	<i>770</i>
<i>Total fat</i>	<i>15 g</i>
<i>Total Carbohydrate</i>	<i>134 g</i>
<i>Total Fiber</i>	<i>14 g</i>
<i>Sodium</i>	<i>365 mg</i>
<i>Protein</i>	<i>31 g</i>

- **Nutritional Fact:** Chickpeas, or garbanzo beans, are a type of legume, plants that are in the Pea family. They are a staple of Middle Eastern, Mediterranean and South Asian cooking. These beans pack a punch when it comes to micronutrients providing 74% of the Daily Value (DV) of manganese, 71% DV of folate (vitamin B9) and 64% DV of copper. And let's not forget the 12.5 g of gut healthy fiber per serving (1 C cooked). Like all legumes, chickpeas provide a high amount of protein at 14.5 g per serving.
- **Cultural Fact:** Falafel is a popular Middle Eastern dish made of a mixture of chickpeas (or fava beans), fresh herbs, and spices that are formed into small patties or balls then fried in olive oil. An airfryer would be a healthier alternative

#### *CLASSROOM COOKING + CLEANING - 75 MINUTES*

1. Have participants put on aprons, hats/hair nets, and wash hands.
2. Review recipes that will be used in this class and discuss that this menu was designed to be a heart healthy meal.
3. Demo the various cooking skills needed for today's class. As each ingredient is covered explain some of the nutritional benefits
4. Break participants into groups of 3-5 and allow each group to prepare the recipes in the following order:
  - a. Whole Wheat Pita Bread
  - b. Falafel
  - c. Mango Lassi

#### *EATING AND GOAL SETTING - 15 MINUTES*

1. Participants gather to enjoy the meal together.
2. As a group or in pairs, discuss what was learned in class today and have participants set simple and realistic goals about what they can incorporate from today's class into the coming week.

#### *CONCLUSION - 10 MINUTES*

1. Answer any remaining questions.
2. Review the Key Understandings for this lesson.
3. Clean-up dining area.

## RECIPES:

### Topping: Falafel

*Yields 6 servings*

#### Ingredients:

- 1 C dry chickpeas\* with 2 quarts water (after soaking)
- 1 medium tomato, diced
- 1 medium cucumber, sliced
- 1 small red onion, sliced
- 1/2 C fresh parsley, roughly chopped
- 1/2 C fresh cilantro, roughly chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 tsp cumin
- 1/4 tsp coriander
- 1/4 C olive oil
- 1/2 recipe Whole Wheat Pita Bread (3 whole pita breads or 6 halves)
- 3/4 C nonfat plain yogurt
- 2 Tbsp tahini (optional)

\*If dry chickpeas are not available, substitute 1 15 oz can of chickpeas. Drain and rinse chickpeas. Pat dry to remove excess liquid.

#### Directions:

##### 1. Mise en Place

- Day Before: If using dried chickpeas: fill a large bowl or pot with water. Add the chickpeas and soak overnight or for at least 8 hours.
- If using canned chickpeas - drain, rinse, and pat dry.
- Preheat the oven to 375° F if baking.
- Wash and dry the tomato, cucumber, onion, parsley, and cilantro.
- Slice the tomato, cucumber, and onion.
- Chop the parsley and cilantro.
- Peel and mince garlic.
- Measure out the ingredients.

##### 2. Create the Falafel Mixture

- Add chickpeas, parsley, cilantro, onion, cumin, coriander, and garlic to a food processor. Add in any optional ingredients of your choice.
- Process until smooth, occasionally scraping down the sides of the container, until the ingredients are fully incorporated and the chickpeas are finely ground.
- If a food processor is unavailable, mash chickpeas into smooth paste
- Tip: The mixture will look dry at first but don't worry! As you process it, it should become more moist and stick together like dough.

### 3. Create Falafel Discs

- Measure out 2–3 Tbsp of chickpea mixture and shape into a disk, about ½ inch thick. Repeat with remaining mixture.

### 4. Cook the falafel using one of the methods below: baking or cooking on the stove top.

#### Bake the Falafels

- Add just enough canola oil to coat the baking sheet, about 2 Tbsp.
- Place falafels on the baking sheet and flip so that both sides have a thin coat of oil before they begin to cook.
- Bake for 15 minutes on one side. Then carefully flip and bake for another 10–15 minutes or until the falafels are a deep golden color on both sides.

#### Cook the Falafels on the Stovetop

- In a medium skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Once the oil is hot, carefully place falafels in the skillet, then turn the heat to medium-low.
- Tip: Be sure to leave a little space between the falafels so that they are not overcrowded. You may have to cook them in two or three batches.
- Cover the skillet and cook for 5–10 minutes on each side, or until both sides are a deep golden color.

### 5. Serve

- To serve, cut each pita bread into 2 half-moons.
- Open up the pocket and fill with 3 falafel and sliced tomato, cucumber, and onion.
- Drizzle with tahini sauce or plain yogurt.
- Serve and enjoy.

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## Whole Wheat Pita Bread

*Yields 6 servings*

*Adapted from Pioneer Woman*

### Ingredients:

- 1 packet yeast (3/4 tsp active dry yeast)
- 1 C water, warm, 110 °F
- 1/2 Tbsp honey
- 1 C all-purpose flour, +1/2 C for rolling
- 2 C whole wheat flour
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp olive oil

### Directions:

#### 1. Mise en Place

- Preheat the oven to 450° F.
- Line a baking tray with parchment paper.
- Measure out the ingredients.

#### 2. Start the Dough

- Mix together the yeast, warm water, and honey in a small bowl.
- Let sit for about 10 minutes to proof. You'll see bubbles form on top.
- Combine all-purpose flour, whole wheat flour, and salt into a large bowl.
- Create a well in the center of the dry ingredients.
- Add yeast mixture to the well and combine.

#### 3. Prepare the Dough

- Mix the wet and dry ingredients together with your hands.
- Knead the dough for 5 minutes, adding more flour if needed. The dough should be soft, not flaky or sticky.
- Lightly coat a bowl with the oil and place the dough ball inside.
- Cover with plastic wrap or a towel and let it rest in a warm place for about 30 minutes.

#### 4. Portion Dough

- Divide the dough into 6 portions and shape each into a ball.
- Place the balls onto a clean, floured surface.
- Roll out each ball with a rolling pin into a 1/4-inch-thick circle.
- Transfer balls to the prepared cooking tray.
- Place in the oven and bake each pita for 5 minutes or until the pita puffs up.
- Remove and allow to cool.

## Mango Lassi

*Yields 6 servings*

Adapted from Cooking Classy

### Ingredients:

- 2 C frozen diced mango
- 2 C nonfat plain yogurt
- 4 Tbsp honey
- 1/2 tsp cardamom, or other desired spice (optional)

### Directions:

#### 1. Mise en Place

- Measure out the ingredients.

#### 2. Prepare the Mango Lassi

- Combine all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth.
- Add a little water if necessary to thin the Lassi out.

**Chef's Tip:** Feel free to substitute the mango with bananas or other fruit.

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