



Network for a Healthy California—Retail Program

Food Demonstration

T R A I N I N G K I T



Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Overview	2
Food Demonstration Planning	6
Food Demonstration Promotion	13
Preparation and Implementation	15
Follow-up and Evaluation	21
Appendices	
Grocery Store Definitions	A
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Products Promotable Criteria	B
Food Demonstration Planning Checklist	C
Food Demonstration Confirmation Letter	D
Media Advisory	E
Food Demonstration Activity Evaluation Form	F
Thank You Letter	G



Introduction

The *Network for a Healthy California—Retail Program (Retail Program)* provides a social marketing framework for the implementation of community-based merchandising and promotional activities for supermarkets, small chains, and independent stores in an effort to influence the purchase and consumption of fruits and vegetables among low-income Californians.

The *Retail Program* uses a combination of in-store merchandising, such as point-of-sale signage and recipe cards; and promotional activities, such as food demonstrations and store tours to educate consumers about selecting and preparing fresh, canned, frozen, dried, and juiced fruits and vegetables at the point of sale.

The *Retail Program* works closely with each *Campaign* and *Program* within the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* to train representatives from community-based organizations, schools, churches, and health care agencies to conduct effective food demonstrations, store tours, and other promotional activities held at local food retailers. As a result, the *Retail Program* has become an invaluable partner for local retailers concerned about the health of the community they serve.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit is designed to provide partners of the *Network* with the knowledge and resources to effectively conduct a fun, interactive, and healthy food demonstration. If you are not part of a *Network*-funded project or you are performing demonstrations at locations outside of the retail environment, this toolkit will still provide adequate guidance for you to perform food demonstrations in your community.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

Building and maintaining a partnership with a retailer in your community is critical to an effective food demonstration. For help on beginning a retail partnership, please review the partnership building materials available on the *Retail Program* Web site at: www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net/retail. Once you've formed a partnership with a retailer, this toolkit will provide guidance on how to plan, promote, prepare, implement, and evaluate an interactive and effective food demonstration.



Overview

PORTRAIT OF A FOOD DEMONSTRATION

One way to promote the consumption of fruits and vegetables is to allow people to taste samples of quality fruits and vegetables such as fresh mango chunks, vegetable sticks, canned asparagus spears, or dried pineapple rings. While simple “taste tests” like these are a great way to showcase a particular item or expose a consumer to a new fruit or vegetable, a more effective way to encourage consumers to buy and prepare more fruits and vegetables is to host a food demonstration. A food demonstration is a “how to” presentation that involves instructing participants about ingredient selection, guiding them through each step of a recipe, and tasting a finished product.

An effective food demonstration will include:

- A recipe that meets nutrition standards set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These nutrition standards are known as the *CDC Products Promotable Criteria* (see [Appendix B](#))
- How to select and store the fruits or vegetables highlighted in the recipe
- How to prepare the recipe
- The health benefits of the recipe
- Ideas on how to fit the recipe into a family’s meal plan
- An attractive display of the finished product
- A tasting of the finished product



FOOD DEMONSTRATION BASICS

A food demonstration should present one or more recipes over a time span of 3 to 4 hours. A 4-hour demonstration is the best way to reach a large number of community members as they shop, but if your retail partner imposes time constraints, your food demonstration should last at least 3 hours. The number of people reached at your demonstration depends on the size of store, the time of the demonstration, and the effectiveness of any pre-promotions you have conducted.

A 4-hour demonstration with 4 staff members and ample space may look like this:

TIME	DESCRIPTION
9:15 – 10:00 am	Set Up
10:00 – 10:30 am	Food Demonstration Recipe 1
10:30 – 11:00 am	Fruit, Vegetable, and Physical Activity Game Wheel Activity/Q&A
11:00 – 11:30 am	Food Demonstration Recipe 2
11:30 – 12:00 pm	Fruit, Vegetable, and Physical Activity Game Wheel Activity/Q&A
12:00 – 12:30 pm	Food Demonstration Recipe 1
12:30 – 1:00 pm	Fruit, Vegetable, and Physical Activity Game Wheel Activity/Q&A
1:00 – 1:30 pm	Food Demonstration Recipe 2
1:30 – 2:00 pm	Fruit, Vegetable, and Physical Activity Game Wheel Activity/Q&A
2:00 – 2:30 pm	Clean up

Alternatively, a 3-hour demonstration with limited staff and space may look like this:

TIME	DESCRIPTION
11:30 – 12:00 pm	Set Up
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Food Demonstration Recipe 1
1:00 – 1:30 pm	Recipe tasting and Q&A (until samples run out)
1:30 – 2:30 pm	Second Demonstration of Recipe 1
2:30 – 3:00 pm	Recipe tasting and Q&A (until samples run out)
3:00 – 3:30 pm	Clean up

Each example varies by the number of staff available, the amount of foot traffic at the store, the amount of time the retailer allowed for the event, and the amount of space available to set up other activities. While your demonstrations will vary due to these factors, one thing that should remain the same is your ability to engage, educate, and empower consumers by letting them see, taste, and smell how wonderful fruits and vegetables can be.



QUESTIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED BY RETAILERS

While discussing your food demonstration with your retail partner, be prepared to address a variety of concerns that they may have. By allowing you to conduct a food demonstration at their store, retailers are giving you access to their valued customers which they have worked very hard to secure. What you do and say at your demonstration will reflect on them long after you've packed up and gone home. Understanding this responsibility will enable you to become a greater asset to your retail partner. Likewise, they will value your role in providing their customers with a professional, interactive, and beneficial service.

How much will these food demonstrations cost me?

- Remember that there are food demonstration companies out there that charge for their services. Reassure your retail partner that you are offering a free service and that your main objective is to increase fruit and vegetable sales at their location. Focus on the service that you are providing your retailers customers in the form of education and informative materials.

Quick tip:

- This would be a good time to mention or show your retail partner the free Nutrition Education Reinforcement Items (NERI) you will give to their customers to increase fruit and vegetable sales.

- Ask if the ingredients needed for the demonstration(s) can be donated. If the retailer cannot provide donations and is firm on this decision, you will need to purchase the appropriate ingredients.

Quick tip:

- Before you ask for food donations, it's a good idea to estimate how much you will need. Use the food quantity calculation chart on [page 8](#) to estimate how much of each ingredient you will need. Depending on the recipe you choose, you can provide samples for over 200 people for under \$40.
- If your retail partner cannot donate the food you will need, ask if you can purchase it at a discount. Do not use donations from other retailers for your food demonstration.

Will these demonstrations add to my staff's workload?

- Be very clear with your retailer what their responsibilities will be on the day of the demonstration (providing a space for the demonstration, allowing the use of their sink, access to an electrical outlet, etc).
- Gauge your retailer's interest. If they have a staff member that they would like to have trained on *Network* messages, invite the staff member to participate. If your retailer seems reluctant, be prepared to perform your demonstration with minimal involvement from their staff.

This sounds messy, what about the clean up?

- Reassure your retail partner that you'll be responsible for keeping your demonstration area clean and safe (i.e., putting a mat over extension cords and wiping up spills so customers won't slip).
- Give your retail partner an estimate on how long it will take you to set up and break down your demonstration area on the day of the event.



My store is pretty small. Will you have room for your food demonstration?

- The food demonstration tables provided to Network-funded projects are 32" wide x 12" deep x 38" high. If this question comes up during an onsite meeting, this would be a good time to walk out to the area you would like to have your demonstration, and show your retail partner how you will conduct a demonstration without obstructing traffic.
- If there is no room inside the store, ask about the possibility of holding the demonstration in a secured area in front of the store or in the parking lot.
- If you work with a number of small retailers and have found a smaller demonstration table that meets your needs, you may consider using this instead.

Will the food prepared at the demonstration be safe?

- This is where your certified food demonstration staff will come in handy (see [page 18](#))! You can assure your retail partner that the person conducting the demonstration is qualified to safely prepare and serve food samples to their customers.
- If the food demonstration will have to be moved outside, you will have to acquire a food demonstration permit that will provide the necessary coverage for an outdoor demonstration (be sure to check with your county health department regarding other restrictions).

Food Demonstration Stats

According to Fresh Trends, an annual study published by a leading industry newspaper, [The Packer](#):

- 66 percent of consumer purchasing decisions are made in the store.
- 86 percent of consumers who purchased a product for the first time did so as a result of a free sample.
- In-store promotions, such as food demonstrations, enhance product identification and are an effective means of educating consumers about a product or service.

A prominent retail consulting firm, [Nuffer, Smith, Tucker](#) adds:

- Large chains consider food demonstrations and sampling as an ideal way to educate consumers, create in-store excitement, and increase sales.
- Retailers believe in the power of demonstrations within the produce department to increase awareness, knowledge, trial, and sales of fresh fruits and vegetables.

I have companies that pay to perform food demonstrations. Why should I let you do them for free?

- When a representative from a particular brand performs a food demonstration, they only promote their own products. Since your goal is to encourage customers to buy and consume more fruits and vegetables in general, you have the ability to promote foods from almost every aisle in the store.



Food Demonstration Planning

To be successful, effective planning is crucial. You will be responsible for securing the date, time, and location of your food demonstration; choosing an appropriate recipe; collecting all of the necessary presentation, preparation, sampling, and sanitation supplies; and confirming the final details of the demonstration with your retail contact. To help you stay on track with your planning efforts, you may also use the *Food Demonstration Planning Checklist* provided in Appendix C.

SECURING A DATE, TIME, AND LOCATION

To help you select a date, time, and location with the retailer for food demonstration activities, consider the following:

- When securing a date, avoid major holiday shopping days, such as around Christmas or Thanksgiving, when customers may be in a hurry and your presence may be a burden to retail staff.
- Arrange demonstrations during prime dates to reach low-income families such as the first of the month when food stamp benefits are disbursed.
- While shopping patterns will vary from store to store, ideal times for a food demonstration tend to be from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm and from 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm. Monday and Tuesday are usually the slowest days of the week, while Saturday and Sunday are the busiest. Always confirm if these general guidelines hold true for your retail partner.

- Conduct demonstrations in an accessible location. Choose a place in the store where people can comfortably stop, sample the product, and talk to the demonstrator, preferably in a visible location in the produce department.
- If the demonstration will be held outside, contact your county health department about the need for permits to hold the demonstration outdoors.

SELECTING RECIPES

The ability to select appropriate, easy-to-prepare recipes can often challenge the most successful demonstrator as available space, time, and materials may limit the types of recipes chosen.

To help you select recipes for food demonstration activities, consider the following:

- It is strongly advised that recipes be derived from *Network* cookbooks such as *Everyday Healthy Meals* cookbook, *Healthy Latino Recipes Made with Love* cookbook, or the *Power Play! Kids Get Cookin'* cookbook. These recipes have been taste tested, contain inexpensive ingredients, and meet nutrition criteria for healthy fruit and vegetable recipes.

Quick tip:

- If your retailer would like you to highlight a specific fruit or vegetable that is not featured in any of the *Network* cookbooks, make sure that any new recipe you would like to use meets the *CDC Products Promotable Criteria* (see [Appendix B](#)).
- Make sure your retail partner carries the ingredients for the recipe that you select. Do not use food donations from other retail partners at your food demonstration.
- Check if there are any items that your retail partner will have on sale at the time of your demonstration.
- Remember to choose recipes that use low-cost ingredients. If a particular item is not in season or on sale, remember that canned or frozen fruits and vegetables are affordable alternatives and can be used in many fruit and vegetable recipes.
- Take the weather into consideration; select recipes that are cold (e.g., smoothies and salads) for the spring and summer and recipes that are warm (e.g., sautés and stir fry dishes) for the fall and winter seasons.
- Choose recipes that have minimal ingredients and preparation times. The more complicated a recipe, the longer it will take to prepare. Remember that shoppers are often interested in simple, quick recipes featuring healthy ingredients.
- Once you have selected a recipe to demonstrate, make sure that the retailer will have plenty of product available for customers to buy.

Demonstrating Quality Produce

If your retailer's fresh produce is not of good quality, see if you can find out if the produce is of poor quality when it arrives at the retailer or if the retailer could use additional training on how to handle the produce after it is delivered.

- If your retail partner is buying poor quality produce, you may choose a recipe that highlights canned or frozen fruits and vegetables until your partner can improve the quality of their selection.
- If the quality of your retailer's produce is declining on the shelves, try to have your food demonstration on the day the produce arrives. You can also provide your retail partner with the *Produce Handling Guide*, which can be found on the *Retail Program* Web site at: www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net/retail.



GUIDELINES FOR CALCULATING INGREDIENT QUANTITIES

The next step in planning your food demonstration activity is determining how many times you will need to prepare the recipe to provide samples for the number of people you are expecting. Individual serving sizes will vary from recipe to recipe (e.g., ¼ cup, half a pita, one wedge, or one skewer per serving). In general, one food demonstration sample is either two liquid ounces or about one fourth of your recipe's indicated serving size.

The table provided below is an example of how to calculate the number of times a recipe should be repeated if you expect to reach 250 people.

	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE	CALCULATIONS
Step 1	<p>Calculate the total number of samples the recipe produces.</p> <p><i>NOTE: A food demonstration sample is either two liquid ounces or about one fourth of your recipe's indicated serving size.</i></p>	<p>If a smoothie recipe makes 4 one-cup servings, it will make about 16 samples.</p> <p>One cup will make about 4 smoothie samples. Four samples x 4 servings in the recipe = 16 samples.</p>	$\frac{\text{# of samples per serving}}{\text{# of servings per recipe}} \times \frac{\text{# of servings per recipe}}{\text{# of servings per recipe}} = \frac{\text{total samples per recipe}}{\text{# of servings per recipe}}$
Step 2	<p>Calculate the number of times the recipe needs to be prepared.</p>	<p>250 people ÷ 16 samples per recipe = 15.6 times the recipe needs to be repeated.</p> <p>Always round up and include 1 extra preparation to account for spillage.</p> <p>The recipe should be prepared 17 times to provide samples to 250 people.</p>	$\frac{\text{# of people to serve}}{\text{total samples per recipe}} \div \frac{\text{total samples per recipe}}{\text{# of servings per recipe}} = \frac{\text{# of times to make the recipe}}{\text{# of servings per recipe}}$ $\frac{\text{# of times to make the recipe}}{\text{# of servings per recipe}} + 1 = \frac{\text{# of times to make the recipe for the demonstration}}{\text{# of servings per recipe}}$

CONVERSION CHART

LIQUID MEASUREMENT CONVERSIONS	
3 teaspoons	1 tablespoon
2 tablespoons	1 fluid ounce
2 fluid ounces	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup
4 fluid ounces	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup
6 fluid ounces	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup
1 cup	8 fluid ounces
8 fluid ounces	16 tablespoons
16 tablespoons	48 teaspoons
1 pint	2 cups
2 cups	16 fluid ounces
1 quart	2 pints
2 pints	4 cups
4 cups	32 fluid ounces
1 gallon	4 quarts
4 quarts	8 pints
8 pints	16 cups
16 cups	128 fluid ounces
WEIGHT MEASUREMENT CONVERSIONS	
16 ounces	1 pound

Now that you know how many times you'll need to prepare your recipe, find out the quantity of ingredients the demonstration will require. Use the following as an example of how you would calculate your recipe.

Fruit Smoothie

Makes 4 servings (1 cup per serving)

The recipe makes 16 samples. According to the calculations described on [page 8](#), the recipe should be prepared 17 times to serve samples to 250 people. Knowing how much food you will need will help you be specific when you are requesting food donations from your retail partner.

INGREDIENTS:	COST OF FOOD:	TOTAL COST:
1 large banana	1 banana: \$0.25	17 bananas \$4.25
1 cup frozen strawberries	1 16-ounce package frozen strawberries (about 2 cups): \$3.00	9 packages of frozen strawberries \$27
1 cup orange juice	1 quart orange juice: \$1.50	5 quarts orange juice \$7.50
1 cup vanilla yogurt	1 quart yogurt: \$2.50	5 quarts yogurt \$15
		<hr/> Total cost of food \$53.75*



*Prices listed here are based on prices found in Sacramento area stores during the development of this publication. Actual costs will vary depending on your region and the time of year.

DETERMINING SUPPLIES

The serving and preparation supplies that you will need depend on the recipe(s) selected. As part of your planning activities, note which serving supplies will be required for each demonstration activity. The recipes you select should utilize current resources available through your organization to minimize the cost of purchasing new supplies.

The foundation of your food demonstration is the presentation equipment, which will be provided to *Network*-funded projects and may be ordered through the *Regional Networks* (find your *Regional Network* office at: www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net/rn).

Allow at least 3 weeks lead time in your planning to order and receive the following supplies:

- Plastic folding food demonstration table on wheels with a power cord (32" W x 12" D x 38" H and 40 lbs.)
- Plastic garbage can with lid
- Two serving platters
- A basket to display produce at the table
- Food demonstration sign and recipe card holder

Typically, presentation supplies do not vary by demonstration. However, the cooking supplies needed to prepare the recipes will vary depending on the recipe you select. Some examples of cooking supplies that you should bring to your demonstration include:

- Skillet with built-in heat element (for stove-top recipes)
- Blender (for smoothies and some dips)
- Microwave (to steam or warm ingredients)
- Ice chest or cooler (to transport/store ingredients that should remain chilled)
- Storage containers (for items prepared before the demonstration)



- Cooking utensils (spoons and knives)
- Measuring cups/spoons

Just as your cooking supplies will differ according to the selected recipe, the supplies you use to distribute samples to consumers will differ as well. Some items for you to bring to your demonstration may include:

- Four-ounce condiment cups (e.g., Dixie® cups)
- Small paper soufflé cups
- Paper cones
- Small paper plates
- Cocktail napkins
- Plastic spoons
- Plastic forks
- Toothpicks

Just as important as the presentation and preparation supplies are those supplies that ensure food safety and sanitation. More information on food safety and sanitation is provided in the section titled, “*Food Safety and Sanitation*” on [page 18](#). Important items that you should bring to your food demonstration include the following:

- Plastic gloves
- Paper towels
- Sanitizing spray for clean up
- Hand sanitizer
- Hair nets

CONFIRMING WITH THE RETAILER

It is important to confirm any changes or additions you make with your retail contact, preferably in writing. To help you with this step, a sample *Food Demonstration Confirmation Letter* is provided in [Appendix D](#) and available on the *Retail Program* Web site at:

www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net/retail.

Some things to consider as you approach the demonstration date include:

- Ensuring that your contact is fully informed of the food demonstration activity format, including the set up and break down times and the ingredients needed.

- Confirming with your retail contact who will be available onsite the day of the food demonstration and making contact with this person the week before the event. It is also beneficial to call the day before your demonstration to be sure there have been no last minute changes on the part of the retailer.
- Confirming the quantities of food donations that will be made available. If the recipe requires preparation (chopping, slicing, etc.) that you will need to perform before the demonstration, confirm when you should pick up the donations.
- Confirming the process for acquiring the donated ingredients (i.e., will your organization purchase ingredients in advance and be reimbursed through the store, or will you pull ingredients from the shelves and provide the information to the store contact?).
- Confirming that you will have access to the electricity, refrigeration, etc. needed for your food demonstration.
- Maintaining detailed records of conversations, contacts, and information in case you need to refer to these details later in the planning or evaluation process.

Communicate, communicate, communicate!
If there are any changes to the food demonstration activities, be sure to inform the store contact immediately and provide these changes in writing.



Food Demonstration Promotion

There are many opportunities to enhance in-store sampling activities in the community. Through cross-promotions, public relations, and marketing, your food demonstrations can make more of an impact in your community when combined with other activities. We suggest that you pursue free promotions such as:

CROSS PROMOTIONS

- Develop printed announcements detailing the food demonstration activities and provide the information to attendees at other community events, such as festivals, farmers' markets, and flea markets. Distribute the announcements to community partners and organizations as well.
- If you conduct nutrition classes near the retailer, discuss the selected recipe during a class and invite participants to attend. You could also organize class participants into a walking group to walk to the demonstration.

RETAILER PROMOTIONS

- Ask your retail partner to highlight the food demonstration recipes and schedule in the weekly circular. Artwork and messages that can be used to create circulars are available on the *Retail Program* Web site at: www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net/retail.
- Ask your retail partner to display a few NERI such as colanders, vegetable brushes, or lunch coolers that food demonstration participants will receive.
- Post flyers near and around your retail event to let community members know about your upcoming food demonstration.
- Ask your retail partner to periodically announce the food demonstration to shoppers on demonstration day.



PRINT MEDIA

- Issue a *Media Advisory* to announce the food demonstration activities to your local papers and/or food editors using the *Media Advisory* provided in [Appendix E](#) and available on the *Retail Program* Web site at: www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net/retail.
- Provide the food demonstration recipes and schedule of upcoming sampling activities to the food editors of local papers.
- Submit an article about your agency's efforts to improve the health of the community and highlight your upcoming food demonstration as one example of your efforts.

Quick tip:

- Keep clippings of any articles that are published as a result of your promotion efforts. You can show them to other retail partners to help them see the benefits of having food demonstrations at their location.

Media Advisories

The language in a *Media Advisory* should be enticing and in future tense. Advisories should be sent via fax or e-mail at least a week in advance (call the paper to confirm how much lead time they need to report on an event, weekly or monthly publications will require more notice than a daily paper). After the Advisory is sent, make a follow-up call to ensure it was received and to answer any questions.

RADIO MEDIA

- Issue a *Media Advisory* to announce the food demonstration activities to local radio stations and radio programs listened to by your target audience.
- Coordinate a radio remote activity to coincide with in-store sampling activities. Radio remotes may include, but not be limited to, game wheel activities, local celebrity appearances, physical activity demonstrations, community partner involvement, and more. Most radio stations use radio remotes as a source of income, so organizing a free radio remote may require approaching stations with which you already have a relationship. If your retailer buys radio ads, you may also ask if there is a possibility of them receiving a radio remote as part of their advertising package.

Preparation and Implementation

DELIVERING NUTRITION MESSAGES

During the course of a food demonstration activity, it is not only important to provide shoppers with a sample of the product and instructions for recipe preparation, but it is equally important to take advantage of this teachable moment to communicate the importance of eating the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables every day.

The circumstances of a food demonstration require some tactics that make it distinctly different from the type of demonstration you would hold for a class or festival. Instead of having a captive audience that would allow you to prepare and deliver a 20 to 30 minute presentation, you will have to grab the attention of people who may be in a hurry or distracted by their shopping responsibilities. You will have to be flexible and able to deliver short, simple messages that speak to the shoppers' needs.

While you are demonstrating the preparation of a recipe, deliver helpful, simple messages about:

Ingredient Selection

For example:

- Look for avocados with firm, shiny skin.
- When buying canned vegetables, avoid dented cans and rinse the vegetables before using them.
- When buying frozen fruit avoid sweetened varieties and packages that show signs of freezer burn.
- Store your remaining chopped vegetables in an airtight container.



Benefits

For example:

- The vitamin A found in sweet potatoes, and other orange foods like peaches and carrots, helps maintain healthy skin and eyesight.
- This great tasting recipe is low in fat and has no added sugar.
- The vitamins, minerals, fiber, and phytochemicals in this salad will help your body fight chronic diseases like cancer, hypertension, and heart disease.

Preparation

For example:

- This is the easy way to seed a fresh mango.
- It's faster to shred lettuce if you do it like this.
- Your children can help you do this next step.
- This recipe calls for fresh bell peppers, but since they aren't in season now, it's more affordable to use frozen peppers. They are just as healthy and save you time since they come already seeded and sliced.

Serving Suggestions

For example:

- This is easy to bring to work the next day in one of our lunch coolers.
- If you prepare this the night before, it makes for a quick and healthy breakfast.
- This freezes well, so if you make extra, put single portions in freezer bags and your children can reheat them for a healthy dinner if you work late.
- This is a great recipe for cooking mixed frozen vegetables, but another quick way to prepare them is to steam them in the microwave with a small amount of water. It just takes minutes!

RESOURCES FOR NUTRITION EDUCATION MESSAGES

To be able to deliver messages like those suggested, you should do some research on the ingredients of the recipe that you are demonstrating. For more information on the benefits of fruits and vegetables and preparation tips visit:

- The National Fruit and Vegetable Program Web site for information about their highlighted fruit and vegetables for the month at: www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/month.
- You can also learn about the link between fruits, vegetables, physical activity, and chronic disease at: www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/benefits.
- The USDA MyPyramid Web site for information about the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables for better health at: www.mypyramid.gov.
- The *Retail Program* Web site for preparation tips and nutrient information for a variety of fruits and vegetables at: www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net/retail.



NUTRITION EDUCATION REINFORCEMENT ITEMS (NERI)

Educational materials help reinforce the nutrition education information that you share with food demonstration participants and provide them with resources they can use in their daily lives.

The *Network* uses pre-stuffed bags (Goodie bags) that are available through the *Regional Networks* (find your *Regional Network* office at: www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net/rn). Each bag contains brochures, a fruit and vegetable shopping notepad, and a cookbook. To customize these bags for your food demonstration, you can add one NERI that is specific to the recipe selected. For example, if you used canned green beans for the Creole Green Beans recipe instead of fresh, you could distribute colanders to remind participants to rinse the beans before preparing them to lower the amount of sodium found in canned produce.

Quick tip:

- Be sure to offer consumers recipe cards featuring the demonstrated recipe. If you are using a recipe that does not have a recipe card, use the sample recipe card template available on the *Retail Program* Web site at: www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net/retail.
- Describe to participants how NERI items can be used at home to help prepare fruits and vegetables.

Presentation Tips

- Practice delivering nutrition education messages while preparing a recipe for colleagues. You can practice with real food or pantomime in front of a mirror, but going through the motions will help you free your mind to engage your audience in a discussion while you cook.
- Increase audience participation by asking questions like, “Do you like this fruit/vegetable? How do you usually prepare it?”
- Place a damp cloth under mixing bowls to hold them steady and cut down on noise.
- Use wooden spoons rather than metal ones to cut down on noise.
- Tip bowls and pans toward participants so they can see them better.
- Don’t try to speak over loud machines.
- Bring items to garnish the final product such as lettuce leaves, parsley, etc.
- If people ask you questions concerning their health problems, refer them to their physician or the dietician at the clinic, hospital, or doctor’s office that they visit.



FOOD SAFETY AND SANITATION

It is necessary to follow food safety and sanitation guidelines when preparing and serving food to the public. For this reason, we highly recommend that at least one of your food demonstration staff receives a certification in food safety from Servsafe or your local Department of Environmental Health. Servsafe is a nationally recognized food safety training and certification program administered by the National Restaurant Association. The program trains food service workers how to select, store, and prepare food in a manner that lowers the risk of spreading foodborne illness and communicable disease among the general public.

Servsafe requirements vary from county to county. Up to eight hours of instruction may be required before taking the exam, examination fees may be free or cost as much as \$40, and the certification may last from two to four years. To find out about your county's certification requirements, contact your county health department or check the Servsafe Web site at: www.servsafe.com/FoodSafety/regulations/.

To find training classes and exam dates in your region, visit the California Restaurant Association at: www.calrest.org/edfoundation/foodsafety.asp or check with your local Department of Environmental Health.

Below, you will see a number of tips to prevent the spread of foodborne illnesses and communicable diseases. This brief review, however, does not replace an actual Servsafe certification.

Personal Hygiene

- All personnel must be free from illness or disease. This prevents passing germs to the public through food handling, sneezing, or coughing.
- Confine hair in a ponytail, hair net, or under a *Network* hat when serving food. This prevents stray hairs from making their way into food.
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before preparing and offering recipe samples to participants. If hands are in contact with food during slicing or placement on a napkin, it's suggested that you wear gloves.

Quick tip:

- Liquid sanitizer is good if you have to clean your hands during the demonstration, but thoroughly washing your hands in water is preferred.



Food Preparation

- Wash the lids of canned foods before opening. Washing lids keeps dirt from getting into the food. Remember to clean the can opener blade after each use as well.
- Use clean utensils and wash them between cutting different foods. Do not use the same utensils for the preparation of uncooked meat that you use for the preparation of fruits and vegetables.
- Thoroughly rinse fresh fruits and vegetables in water.
- Machinery should be washed as soon as possible. Tools such as food processors, juicers, and smoothie machines should be taken apart and cleaned soon after they are used.
- Use smooth cutting boards made of hard wood or plastic with no cracks. Always wash and sanitize cutting boards after using them for raw foods and before using them for ready-to-eat foods.
- For sanitation reasons, hold bowls from the bottom, not the lip.

Serving Safety

- Never leave the table unattended. If you have to use the restroom, wait until the batch of products is finished and close the cart.
- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Avoid food spoilage by ensuring temperature consistency.
- Never give a child a sample. Besides the legal considerations, the parent should always be present since the parent is the food purchaser and will know of any possible allergic reactions the child might have.
- Never let someone “double dip” and contaminate clean product with their stick or spoon. It’s always better to serve individual servings rather than have one bowl for dipping.
- Do not let shoppers pick a sample directly or to serve themselves. This will help to reduce contamination.

Demonstration Area Safety

- Be careful with electricity. If electrical appliances are used, locate the demonstration table near an outlet and tape down the cord or cover it with a flat mat.
- Be prepared to wipe up spills so that customers do not slip.





DEMONSTRATION SET UP

An important part of any food demonstration activity is attracting customers. Many times, shoppers are hurried and can easily pass up an important sampling opportunity because they did not see the display in the store. To ensure you capture attention during food demonstration activities, keep in mind the following tips:

- Make the table and the surrounding area tidy and colorful.
- Use bright and colorful signage. Balloons help to draw attention, while point-of-sale posters communicate and reinforce the importance of eating fruits and vegetables every day. Point-of-sale posters can be ordered through the *Regional Networks* (find your *Regional Network* office at: www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net/rn).
- Place a display of the products at your table or place the demonstration table near the display in the produce department.
- Display plenty of the fruits or vegetables that are highlighted in the selected recipe. If customers like the sample, this will give them easy access to the products needed to make the recipe.

DEMONSTRATION CLEAN UP

When the food demonstration activities are complete for the day, it is important to ensure the location is left clean of trash and debris. It is in your best interest to leave the space clean to avoid any safety issues. These simple steps will further reinforce your value to your retail partner in reaching their customers.

- If unused food is available and in good condition, ask your retail contact if you can offer it to their staff. A break room may be available for you to leave snacks for employees. If the remaining samples are not in good condition, discard them.
- Unless your food donation agreement with the store specifies otherwise, return any unused produce or store merchandise to your contact.
- Using a spray cleaner and paper towel, completely wipe down the food demonstration table top, sides, and shelves.
- Clean out trays, display basket, and any supplies as appropriate and pack the materials as needed for transport.
- Pick up remaining trash around the food demonstration area, including discarded toothpicks, napkins, etc. If any food or liquid was dropped on the floor, be sure to clean the area with a towel and spray cleaner. Discard all trash collected into the store's dumpster or other location specified by your contact.
- If applicable, remove or replenish any signage and/or display materials as needed.

Follow-up and Evaluation

FOLLOW-UP

It is important to acknowledge your retail partner for their assistance and support. Recognizing the effort and expressing gratitude within two weeks of the activity helps to reinforce the value of the activity and can lead to a stronger partnership. If you choose, include a summary of the demonstration's success and the appreciation your organization has for their support. A sample *Thank You Letter* is provided in [Appendix G](#) and available on the *Retail Program Web* site at:

www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net/retail.

Quick tip:

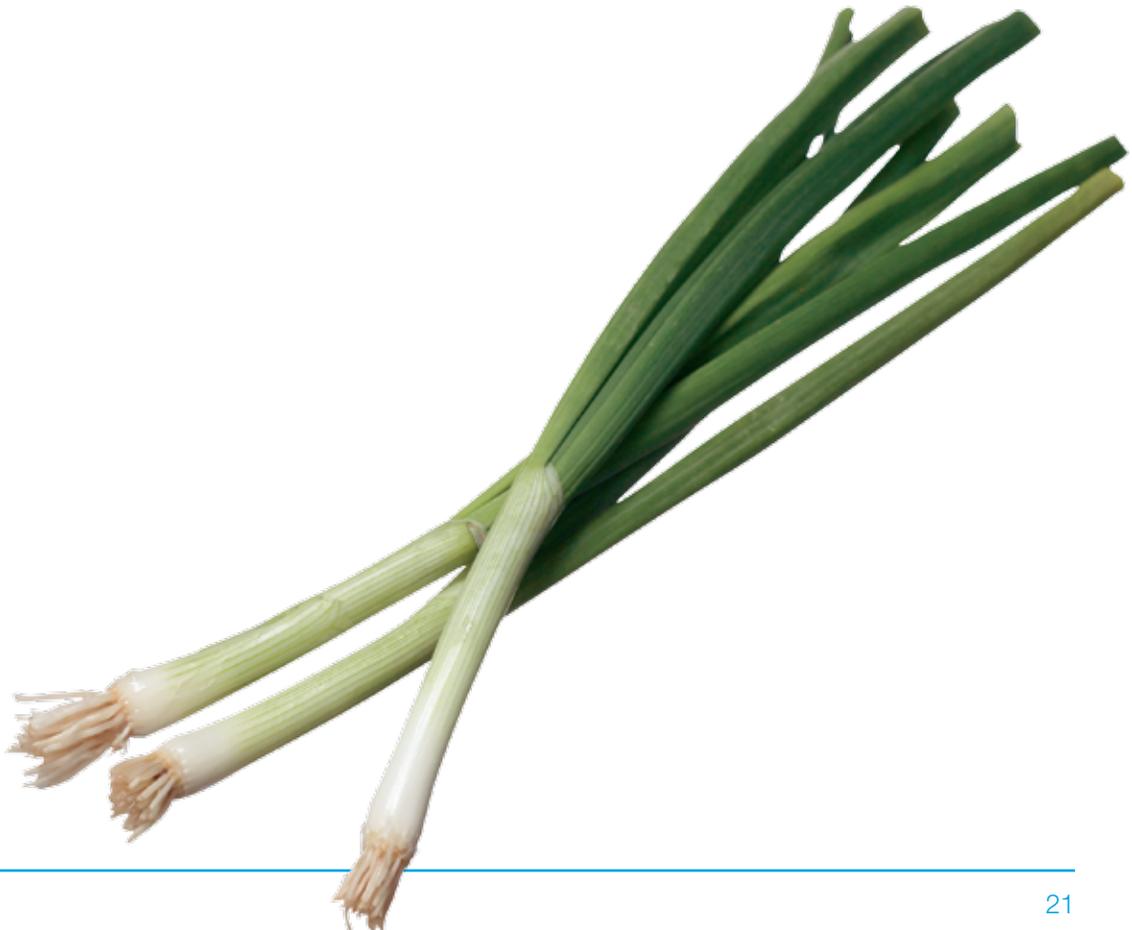
- If possible, add a photo or two along with the thank you letter that shows customers enjoying the food demonstration.

RETAIL ACTIVITY EVALUATION

Once you have completed your food demonstration, it is important to evaluate it and identify your best practices as well as any barriers you faced. One way to record this information is by completing the *Food Demonstration Activity Evaluation Form* in [Appendix F](#) and available on the *Retail Program Web* site at:

www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net/retail.

Referring to this form before your next food demonstration is one way for you to improve your food demonstrations based on past experiences.



Grocery Store Definitions

STORE TYPE	DESCRIPTION	FOOD DEMONSTRATION CONCERNS
Supermarket Chain	A series of 11 or more stores offering a wide variety of groceries, meat, and produce.	In order to conduct food demonstrations in supermarket chains, a partnership may need to be established with the corporate offices before you can work with the local retailers.
Independent Markets	A small “neighborhood” or “mom and pop” grocery store offering limited staple foods and other convenience goods. An independent retailer can own up to 10 stores before it is considered a chain.	Take into consideration the size of the market. You may need to conduct the demonstration outdoors if space is an issue for an indoor demonstration.
Convenience Stores	A small grocery store that customers normally use to make small purchases in between trips to the market.	Make sure the retailer carries enough ingredients for the selected recipe. Take into consideration the size of the market. Convenience stores are less likely to have secured areas for outdoor food demonstrations and owners may be weary of loiterers.
Wholesale or Warehouse Stores	A “no frills” supermarket offering reduced variety, lower service levels, minimal décor, and a streamlined presentation with aggressive low pricing.	In order to conduct food demonstrations in warehouse stores, a partnership may need to be established with the corporate offices.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Products Promotable Criteria

If your retailer would like you to highlight a specific fruit or vegetable that is not featured in any of the *Network* cookbooks or recipe cards, make sure that any new recipe you would like to use meets the products Promotable Criteria set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention described below.

Each Recipe must meet each of the following criteria:

- Each serving of food must contain at least one serving of fruit or vegetable per 250 calories, when prepared as directed.

Note: a serving is defined as:

- ½ cup fresh, frozen, or canned* fruit or vegetable
- ½ cup cooked, dry peas or beans
- 1 cup leafy greens
- ¼ cup dried fruit
- 4 ounces (½ cup) 100% fruit or vegetable juice

*Canned fruit packed in 100% fruit juice.

- Each serving of food must contain limited amounts of added sugars or caloric sweeteners:
 - Added sugars cannot exceed 15% of total calories.

Note: Concentrated fruit juice sweeteners, jams, and jellies count as added sugars.

- Each serving of food must contain limited amounts of fat:
 - Total Fat is ≤35% of total calories.
 - Saturated Fat is <10% of calories.
 - Trans Fat is <0.5g per serving.

Note: The fat found naturally in fruits and vegetables does not contribute to the limits above. Further, < ¼ oz. of nuts per serving is allowed without their fat content contributing to these restrictions. Nuts must be in their natural form without anything added or removed (e.g., no added oils, removed oils, added sodium, or added sugars).

- Each serving of food must contain <600mg of sodium per serving.
- Each serving of food must offer ≥0.014 g/kcal naturally occurring fiber (28g of fiber/2000 calories).
- Processed products cannot be fortified beyond the Food and Drug Administration standards and their policy for food enrichment and fortification (e.g., enriched grain products, vitamins A & D in milk, and iodine in salt) and cannot be enhanced with dietary supplements or be sold as supplements. This does not include vitamins and minerals used as a food preservative (e.g., ascorbic acid and calcium carbonate on sliced fruit.)

Recipes found at the following Web sites already meet these criteria:

Network for Healthy California Consumer Web site: www.cachampionsforchange.net

Produce for Better Health Foundation: www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.com

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov

Food Demonstration Planning Checklist

SECTIONS AND STEPS	Target Completion Date	Check When Complete
Food Demonstration Planning		
Secure a date and time at a qualifying retail location	_/_/_	
Identify recipes to be prepared and sampled	_/_/_	
Calculate the recipe quantities to determine the amount of food needed and request donations	_/_/_	
Confirm verbal details in writing using the Confirmation Letter	_/_/_	
Provide store contact with recipe ingredient list and quantities needed	_/_/_	
Confirm food donations with the retailer	_/_/_	
Follow-up to confirm receipt of the Confirmation Letter and recipe ingredients list Follow-up regularly until the confirmation is returned	_/_/_	
Confirm ingredient list and quantities to be provided by the retailer	_/_/_	
Remind the retailer of the upcoming date, time, and in-store location of demonstration	_/_/_	
Food Demonstration Logistics		
Identify and complete public relations activities announcing the upcoming food demonstration activities	_/_/_	
Identify and order food demonstration equipment, NERI, and goodie bags	_/_/_	
Identify and obtain additional preparation materials and supplies (napkins, forks, plates)	_/_/_	
Food Demonstration Implementation & Follow-up		
If applicable, prepare ingredients in advance (chopping, etc.)	_/_/_	
Meet retail contact at least 30 minutes before the start time to set up food demonstration	_/_/_	
Ensure that the demonstration area is left as clean or cleaner than when you found it	_/_/_	
Complete evaluation of food demonstration event	_/_/_	
Send a Thank You Letter to the retailer	_/_/_	

Food Demonstration Confirmation Letter

DATE

(Name)

(Title)

(Store Name)

(Store Address)

(City), (State) (ZIP)

Dear (Name),

The following is confirmation of your participation in the (Project Name) food demonstration on (Date) from (Start Time – Finish Time).

1. Our staff will be arriving at (Time) to set up for the food demonstration.
2. Our staff will highlight your selection of (Fruit or Vegetable Name) by demonstrating a (Recipe Name).
3. As agreed, the ingredients for the above recipe will be provided by your store free-of-charge. A list of the requested ingredients and quantities will be provided to you by (Date).

or

As agreed, the ingredients for the above recipe will be purchased (at cost, with a 30% discount, etc.) by (Project Name) staff on (Date).

4. Any additional fees for the food demonstrations will be waived.

If this information is correct, please sign and fax this letter to (Name) at (Fax Number) by (Date). This will be important in ensuring accuracy and success for the upcoming activities. If you have any questions, please let us know. Thank you for supporting the health of your community.

First Name	Last Name	Signature
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Media Advisory

A Healthy Life Starts with Your Shopping Cart: Network for a Healthy California Offers Healthy Food Tastings in the (Region) Area

- WHAT: The (Project Name), in an effort to encourage shoppers to select and prepare more fruits and vegetables, will host food demonstrations on (Dates).
- WHEN: (Day, Date, and Recipe Name).
For example: Saturday, July 13 – Strawberry Smoothie
All demonstrations are from (Time am/pm) to (Time am/pm).
- WHERE: (Store Name) located at (Store Address).
- NOTES: According to the United States Department of Agriculture, only one in four Americans eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables daily. Eating fruits and vegetables and getting physical activity every day may reduce the risk of serious problems like obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and certain types of cancer. All recipes are available for media and food editors upon request.
- CONTACT: (Contact Name)
(Program Name)
(Area Code and Phone Number)

For more information about the *Network for a Healthy California*, please visit www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net or call 1-888-328-3483.

Food Demonstration Activity Evaluation Form

DEMO HOST NAME: _____

ORGANIZATION NAME: _____

STORE NAME: _____ CITY: _____

DEMO DATE/TIME: _____

Complete the following by answering the questions below. Submit completed evaluations as specified in the Project Guidelines. Your insight helps the *Retail Program* improve future food demonstration activities.

Demonstration Presentation/Appearance:

1. Where was the demonstration held (produce department, parking lot, center store)?

2. What part of the demonstration appealed most to customers?

3. Was there any aspect of the demonstration that was NOT effective with customers? If so, what?

4. What would you do to improve the demonstration in the future?

Educational Materials and Nutrition Education Reinforcement Items (NERI):

1. How did store customers respond to the materials and NERI?

General

1. What were the most frequently asked questions at the demonstration?

2. What did you like/dislike about hosting a demonstration at this store location?

3. Is there anything else about your experience at this event you would like to add?

Thank You Letter

DATE

(Name)

(Title)

(Store Name)

(Store Address)

(City), (State) (ZIP)

Dear (Name):

On behalf of the (Project Name), I would like to personally thank you for hosting a *Network for a Healthy California* food demonstration. I truly appreciate the time and effort you have taken to provide the space, support, and food donations (if applicable) that allowed us the opportunity to share healthy tips and recipes that benefit the health and well being of the community you serve. Thanks to your participation, the (Project Name) was able to reach (Number) (Store Name) customers with important nutrition information and we look forward to continuing this success in the future.

We thank you for your generosity and look forward to maintaining our strong partnership for a long time to come.

Cordially,

(Your Contact Name)

(Program Name)



Please visit us at
www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net
or call 916-449-5400.

California Department of Public Health
Public Health Institute

This material was funded by USDA's Food Stamp Program through the California Department of Public Health's *Network for a Healthy California*. These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers.

The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help buy nutritious foods for a better diet. For information on the Food Stamp Program, call 1-888-328-3483.