

Eat Well and Be Active Educational Toolkit

Activity Plan #3 (adults): Setting SMART Goals

Purpose

This activity plan is part of a series that supports the *Eat Well and Be Active Every Day* poster. It is designed to help intermediaries educate children and adults about key healthy eating and physical activity messages and encourages individuals to take action to maintain and improve their health.

Educators are encouraged to use the activity plans with a group according to the numbered sequence, as some concepts in the series build on each other. However, educators should adapt suggested activities and sequence to meet the needs of their group.

Topic

This activity plan:

- Introduces SMART goals.
- Discusses how setting SMART goals can be used to improve healthy eating and physical activity habits.

Background

Setting goals is an excellent way to increase motivation to make healthy lifestyle changes.

SMART goal setting is creating an action plan that helps individuals set and achieve personalized goals. SMART goals are: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely.

Canadians can look to Canada's Food Guide and the Physical Activity Guidelines to help set SMART goals as a step toward healthy living. Following Canada's Food Guide and the Physical Activity Guidelines will help Canadians reduce their risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, certain types of cancer and osteoporosis, high blood pressure and depression.

Incorporating healthy eating and physical activity into everyday living by setting SMART goals can help individuals achieve and maintain a healthy body weight and image, improve energy, and increase and maintain bone and muscle strength.

www.health.gc.ca/eatwell-beactive



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SMART goals are:	
Specific	What do I want to do? I should describe exactly what I would like to achieve. Being precise in my goal will allow me to focus on it and will bring me closer to achieving it.
Measurable	How much and how often will I do it? I will indicate a quantity, like number of times, duration and frequency, for the goal. This way, I can mark down on a calendar or in a journal when I've worked on my goal – this gives me proof of my progress and helps motivate me to continue!
Attainable	How will I do it? I should figure out ways in which my goal can be reached. My attitudes, abilities, skills and supports should be well-matched to the goal I am trying to achieve.
Realistic	Can I do it? My goal should be something I am willing and able to commit to working towards. It should be challenging, but not so much so that I will not be able to achieve it. For example, running a marathon may not be a good start if I have never taken up running before; eating spinach every day would not be a good goal if I really dislike spinach. However, joining a running team at school, and eating one green vegetable every day are more realistic goals.
Timely	When will I do it? I will specify a time period (or time frame) during which I will work towards this goal. I will decide when I want to start working on it and by when I would like to have achieved it.

For more information on this topic see [suggested readings](#).

Educator Tip:

These suggested readings are strongly recommended to help you prepare for this activity plan.

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Learning Objectives

After completing the activities below, participants will be able to:

1. Understand what a SMART goal is and why setting goals is important.
2. Write healthy eating and physical activity related SMART goals.
3. Recognize that SMART goals can be short term goals that lead up to and support longer term goals.
4. Identify potential barriers to change and possible solutions to overcome those barriers.

You will need

Required

- One [Eat Well and Be Active Every Day poster](#).
- Copies of [Canada's Food Guide](#) and [Tips to Get Active](#) (adults or older adults) for each participant.
- [Set My SMART Goal!](#) worksheet for each participant.
- [Tracking Chart](#) for each participant.
- Pen or pencil for each participant.

Optional

- [Eat Well and Be Active images](#) as handouts for participants.

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Activities

- Why should I make a change?



[Activity Plan #1](#) discusses the benefits of healthy living.

If you have not completed [Activity Plan #1](#) with your group, you may want to complete the Benefits activity in [Activity Plan #1](#) before completing this activity plan.

If you have already completed [Activity Plan #1](#) with this group, start this activity by recalling the benefits of healthy living discussed previously.

Ask participants, what reasons they have to make a healthy change. For example, to feel better, live longer independently into old age, to maintain body weight and strength, to be able to support and be a part of the lives of children and grandchildren, or to prevent or manage chronic diseases.



KEY MESSAGE: Knowing the benefits is a first step to eating well and being physically active.

- How hard will it be to make a change?



If you completed [Activity Plan #1](#) with your group, highlight key points that came from your discussions on healthy eating and physical activity barriers.

Ask participants to share a change they previously tried to make, and what they found difficult. With the group, brainstorm solutions to these barriers to making healthy changes. Write these down on a flipchart or board.

Make sure to emphasize that the effort to overcome these barriers is worth the benefits you wrote down. See [Barriers to healthy living, solutions and supportive environments](#) for examples of common barriers, solutions and ways to create supportive environments.

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KEY MESSAGE: Identifying barriers and potential solutions can help you overcome these barriers.

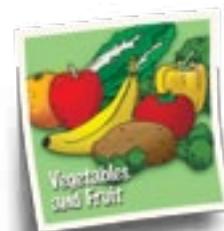
- **Writing Your SMART Goal:**

Following the steps for setting SMART goals lays out an action plan for change!

- a. Discuss with participants what each letter in “SMART” represents and give an example of a SMART goal. SMART goals are: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely.

Healthy Eating SMART Goal example:

- **Specific: What do I want to do?** I would like to eat more fruit.
- **Measurable: How much and how often will I do it?** I will eat one fruit every day.
- **Attainable: How will I do it?** I will add fruit to my lunch every day.
- **Realistic: Can I do it?** I like the fruit that I pack in my lunch.
- **Timely: When will I do it?** I will do it this week.



Healthy Eating SMART Goal: I will eat more fruit by having one fruit with lunch every day this week.

Physical Activity SMART Goal example:

- **Specific: What do I want to do?** I would like to walk more.
- **Measurable: How much and how often will I do it?** I will get off the bus early at the end of the day and walk 15 minutes to home three days next week.
- **Attainable: How will I do it?** I will wear my walking shoes and make sure I'm dressed for walking outside.
- **Realistic: Can I do it?** I'll walk through the pleasant surroundings of the neighbourhood park and it won't take much longer than if I remain on the bus until my regular stop.
- **Timely: When will I do it?** I will start next week.



Physical Activity SMART Goal: I will get off the bus early at the end of the day and walk 15 minutes through the park to home on Monday, Wednesday and Friday next week.

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b. Brainstorm ideas on what healthy living goals they can make.



If you have already completed [Activity Plan # 2](#) with this group, ask participants to use their completed [Smart Choices Checklist](#) for ideas on goals they may want to set.

Or, ask participants to look at the images (you may want to print out several [Eat Well and Be Active images](#) to circulate), and find two images they like or can relate to: one image portraying healthy eating and one image portraying physical activity. Write a few of these down on a flipchart or board. Use these examples of images to discuss possible goals they can set.

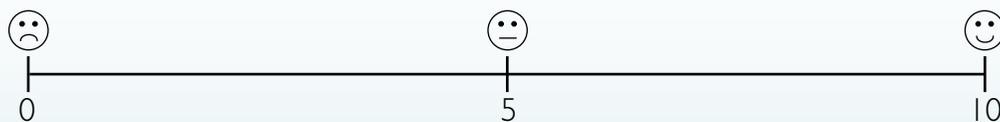
c. Hand out two copies of the [Set My SMART Goal! worksheet](#) to each participant. Ask participants to write one healthy eating SMART goal and one physical activity SMART goal.

Along with each of their goals, ask participants to think of one barrier that may make their goal difficult to achieve. Ask them to write a solution to this barrier. Think about the earlier discussion on barriers (“How hard will it be to make a change?” section).



KEY MESSAGE: Goal setting is very important for making successful healthy lifestyle changes.

- **Achieving Your Goal:** Remind participants that small steps lead to successful goals. Ask participants how confident they feel that they can achieve their goal: use a scale of zero to ten (0 to 10), where zero (0) is “I have no confidence at all that I can achieve my SMART goal” and ten (10) is “I am completely confident that I can fully achieve my SMART goal.” If they are on the lower end of the scale, then the SMART goal should be modified to be more achievable.



KEY MESSAGE: Short term goals can lead to great successes. Celebrate the achievement of all goals.

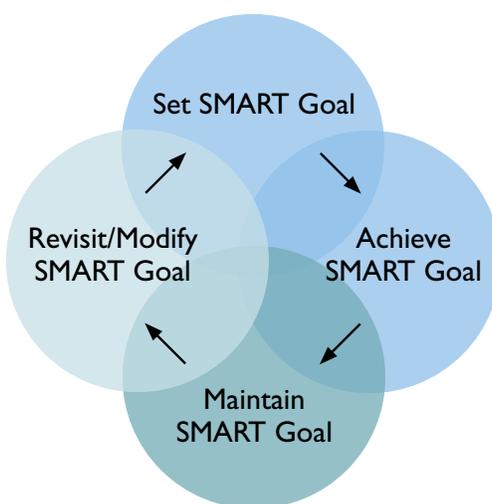
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Supplementary Activity

Have a follow-up session: Continue to encourage small steps and working on goals for healthy living. Ask participants to track their progress using the [Tracking Chart](#).

If possible, ask participants to come back in one or two weeks to discuss the benefits, barriers, successes and progress of their SMART goals.

Setting and achieving goals may not be a straight forward process. Revisit goals often and make changes as necessary to help you achieve them. Create challenging, but realistic goals.



Suggested Readings

Healthy Eating

- [Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide](#)
- [Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide – A Resource for Educators and Communicators](#) (Sections 2 and 3)
- [Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide – First Nations, Inuit, and Métis](#)

Physical Activity

- [Tips to Get Active \(adults, ages 18-64\)](#)
- [Tips to Get Active \(older adults, ages 65 and over\)](#)
- [Physical Activity Guidelines for Adults \(18-64 years\)](#)
- [Physical Activity Guidelines for Older Adults \(65 years and older\)](#)



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Barriers to healthy living, solutions and supportive environments

Barriers	Potential Solutions
<p>I don't have enough time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule physical activity, meal planning, grocery shopping and cooking into your daily routine. Try combining these by walking to the grocery store. • Make commuting to work or school physically active: bike, walk, or jog all or part of the way. • Invite co-workers to go for walks at breaks. • Take the stairs instead of the elevator whenever possible. • Ask your family to help get meals started. • Prepare some foods in advance and keep in the freezer. For example, soups, stews, lasagne, cooked ground beef, cooked rice or pizza dough.
<p>Being physically active and eating well seems too expensive.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The outdoors is free! Make use of sidewalks, parks, bike paths and trails. Some community centres lend out equipment or have organized leisure activities for a low cost. • Physical activity does not need to happen in a gym - many activities count: walking or biking to work, dancing, gardening. • There are ways to eat healthy on a budget, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Buy vegetables and fruit fresh when they are in season. ~ Choose canned or frozen vegetables and fruit. ~ Use beans, lentils and other legumes in place of meat several times a week. ~ Stock up on canned and frozen goods and staples when they are on sale.
<p>I don't have transportation to get to big grocery stores, and local stores have little variety.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check with community centres in your area. They may have food programs or a bus service for transporting community members to grocery stores. • Try walking to the grocery store – bring a backpack or pull cart to carry your groceries home. • Check to see if you are eligible to have your groceries delivered to your home. • Talk to other community members and neighbours. You can go grocery shopping as a group or car pool.

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Barriers	Potential Solutions
I don't have anyone to help me make changes or to make changes with.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check your community centres for physical activity and cooking groups. • Talk to co-workers and neighbours about what you can do in your environment to practice healthy living. • Find out if there is a mall walking group at your local mall for support to help make walking easier in the winter months.
My other family members won't like the change I make as it will affect them too.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start with very small changes. • Let family members help decide what change will be made and how you will work together to make successful changes. Family members are more likely to try a change if they have a hand in planning it! • Try introducing new foods in family favourite meals. • Make family time active, quality time. Go for a walk, skate, bike ride or snowshoe together.
I eat out a lot and find it hard to eat well.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for places that offer whole grains, vegetables and fruit and lower-fat choices. • Order small or appetizer portions or share a meal with a friend. • Choose water, milk, fortified soy beverages or 100% juice instead of high sugar beverages. • Fill up on tossed salad, but order dressing on the side and use sparingly. • Get together with friends and walk to your favourite healthy eatery.
I don't have enough information to make informed healthy changes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit your local community centre for information and assistance. • Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada have many good resources to help you learn about healthy eating and physical activity. Visit Canada's Food Guide and Tips to Get Active.

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Barriers	Potential Solutions
I don't have a safe place to walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask about safe walking paths and mall walking programs in your community• Volunteer to help supervise young children in a 'walking school bus' to and from school in your neighbourhood. It is like a car-pool, except without the car, but with the added benefits of physical activity, visiting with friends and neighbours, and reduced air pollution emissions. Visit Active & Safe Routes to School for more information.
Creating supportive environments	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Practice eating well and being active with other people. Grocery shop, cook, walk and play sports with friends and family.• Write down goals and put them in a place where you will see them every day to remind you to maintain progress towards achieving them.• Learn more about healthy eating and physical activity to motivate you to take action.• Make short term goals to help reach longer term goals.• Feel good about the achievement of every goal.• Seek help from people with experience. Ask your health professional, family or friends for help and ideas.	

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Set My SMART goal! worksheet

Name: _____		
My SMART goal for <input type="checkbox"/> healthy eating <input type="checkbox"/> physical activity		
S	Specific	What do I want to do?
M	Measurable	How much and how often will I do it?
A	Attainable	How will I do it?
R	Realistic	Can I do it?
T	Timely	When will I do it?
My SMART Goal:		

What is one barrier that may make your goal difficult? How can you overcome it? _____

Your signature: _____ Date: _____

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Tracking Chart

Keep track of your progress using the Tracking Chart!

Tracking Chart							
Name:	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
My SMART Healthy Eating Goal:							
My SMART Physical Activity Goal:							