Healthier Hospital Foods

Practice Innovations and Strategies for Successful Implementation

Lessons Learned Through Sodium Reduction Efforts
Overview

Project background and summary

Sodium reduction strategies
  Procurement mechanisms
  Menus and recipes
  Promotions

Healthier Hospital Food Toolkit
EMHS is an integrated healthcare delivery system serving the State of Maine. The system’s broad range of services includes nine hospitals, physician practices, long-term care facilities, home health and hospice, and ground and air emergency transport services.

During the past two years, three hospitals participated in the Sodium Reduction in Communities Program:

- Eastern Maine Medical Center
- Acadia Hospital
- Blue Hill Memorial Hospital
## Participating Hospitals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type of Facility</th>
<th>Number of Beds</th>
<th>Foodservice Offered in Cafeteria</th>
<th>Customers Per Day (avg.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EMMC</td>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>Cafeteria line, pizza, salad bar, grab and go items, packaged and homemade snacks/desserts</td>
<td>1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acadia Hospital</td>
<td>Mental Health Facility</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Cafeteria line, salad bar, grab and go options, snacks</td>
<td>400 - 450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Hill Memorial Hospital</td>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Cafeteria line, salad bar, grab and go options, snacks</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sodium Reduction Efforts

Each organization modified five popular items

Focused on EMHS employee health

More than 5,800 employees at participating organizations

Benefits community and business members
Sodium Reduction Strategies

Tailored strategies based on:

- Wants and needs of the target population
- Resources available
  * Trained staff
  * Equipment
  * Time and space
  * Funding
Sodium Reduction Strategies

• Challenge to balance flavor, cost, and nutritional quality

• Changes were manageable, sustainable, cost effective, delicious, and healthier

• Experienced unique environments and features at each organization

• Implemented a wide variety of sodium reduction strategies
Sodium Reduction Strategies

Procurement

Procured six new low-sodium items:

- Diced canned tomatoes
- Canned kidney beans
- Marinara sauce
- Chicken soup base
- Poultry and Beef gravy mix
- Precooked, whole turkey breast
Sodium Reduction Strategies

Low-sodium Turkey breast = largest reduction in sodium

- 93% reduction
- 520 mg to 35 mg per serving

**Acadia** = 26% increase in usage

- Salad and sandwich bar
- Hot dishes
Sodium Reduction Strategies

Blue Hill Memorial Hospital

Based on success at Acadia began using the same low-sodium turkey

* Salad bar
* Plan to use in hot dishes

Cost effective

* Less expensive than pre-sliced deli meat
Sodium Reduction Strategies

Reformulated recipes

- Reduced amount of high-sodium ingredients
- Remove added salt or ‘season to taste’
- Scratch-made instead of purchasing
- Replaced shredded mozzarella cheese with fresh mozzarella cheese
Sodium Reduction Strategies

“Domino effect”

New ingredients changed 53 recipes; well beyond the original five menu items selected

* Diced, canned tomatoes affected 34 recipes at EMMC alone
Sodium Reduction Strategies

Promotions

Most important strategy – not advertising reduction in sodium

Based on target population assessment and foodservice directors request

“Stealth Health” approach
Polling

Do you believe that advertising or labeling low-sodium foods is an effective method to increasing the consumption of low-sodium products?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure
Stealth Health

Rationale

➤ Avoid stigma and prejudices against low-sodium foods

➤ Track changes in sales and popularity of items without interference
Sodium Reduction Strategies

Promotions

• Culturally-themed
• Provided samples
• Recipe cards with nutrition facts
• Test new recipes
• Incorporated into regular menu cycle
Sodium Reduction Strategies

Advertising

- Newsletters
- EMHS intranet
- Signs in cafeteria

Sampling

- Hesitant to purchase before tasting
- Opportunity to try something new
- Influenced sales
Healthier Hospital Foods Toolkit

Successful Implementation Strategies

Lessons Learned

Effective and sustainable changes
## Brazilian Fish Stew
*Country of Origin: Brazil*

**Original Sodium Content**: 439 mg  
**Modified Sodium Content**: 271 mg  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredients</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Instructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable oil</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onion, diced</td>
<td>12 ¾ cups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garlic, minced</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
<td>1. Heat oil in pan and sauté onions, garlic, and jalapenos until softened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jalapeno, diced, canned</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
<td>2. Add the paprika, coriander, and black pepper and continue to sauté for two to three minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paprika, ground</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coriander, ground</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black pepper, ground</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-sodium tomatoes, canned, diced</td>
<td>3 ¾ - #10 cans</td>
<td>3. Add tomatoes and coconut milk, bring to a boil, and simmer for 30 minutes or until sauce begins to thicken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coconut milk</td>
<td>20 (14oz. cans)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish filet, bite size chunks</td>
<td>12 ½ lbs.</td>
<td>4. Add fish and shrimp and then simmer gently until cook through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrimp</td>
<td>12 ½ lbs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lime juice</td>
<td>25 oz.</td>
<td>5. Add lime juice and mix very gently because too much stirring will cause the fish to break apart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White rice, dry</td>
<td>17 cups</td>
<td>6. Combine rice and water and then steam for 30 minutes or until cooked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>34 cups</td>
<td>7. Serve stew over rice and garnish with sliced scallions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scallions, sliced</td>
<td>1 ¾ cups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Healthier Hospital Foods Toolkit

Sales data from project

Examples of nutrition policies

Sodium reduction efforts from across the country

Nutrient analysis software comparison chart

Top 10 Sources of Sodium in the Diet

- Bread and rolls
- Cold cuts or cured meats
- Pizza
- Poultry products injected with saline solution
- Soups (especially premade varieties)
- Sandwiches
- Cheese
- Pasta dishes
- Meat dishes
- Snacks
# Healthier Hospital Foods Toolkit

## Supplemental and Educational Materials

### EMHS Sodium-Themed Newsletter

And more…

---

**State of Maine Promising Strategies in Sodium Reduction in Hospitals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent Reduced</th>
<th>Entree</th>
<th>Product(s) Substituted</th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93%</td>
<td>Sliced Turkey Breast</td>
<td>Deli Turkey</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82%</td>
<td>Chicken Noodle Soup</td>
<td>Chicken Broth</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52%</td>
<td>Cheese Ravioli with Spaghetti Sauce</td>
<td>Marinara Sauce</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45%</td>
<td>Nacho Pie</td>
<td>Nacho Sauce &amp; Kidney Beans</td>
<td>734</td>
<td>406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44%</td>
<td>Pork Tenderloin with Mushroom Sauce</td>
<td>Gravy Mix</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41%</td>
<td>Beef and Cheese Burrito</td>
<td>Taco Seasoning &amp; Tortilla</td>
<td>937</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39%</td>
<td>Baked Chicken Ranch Wrap</td>
<td>Ranch Dressing, Cheese &amp; Tortilla</td>
<td>924</td>
<td>562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34%</td>
<td>Summertime Chicken Salad</td>
<td>Mayonnaise to Low-Fat Yogurt</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33%</td>
<td>Chicago-Style Turkey Dogs</td>
<td>Hot Dog &amp; Bun</td>
<td>1029</td>
<td>689</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Polling

Would a toolkit such as this be helpful in facilitating or initiating changes at your organization or facility?

✓ Yes
✓ No
✓ Unsure
Healthier Hospital Foods Toolkit

Enable and inspire others to make changes

Provide materials and information based on our experience that can be used to…

- Educate
- Encourage
- Expedite
Healthier Hospital Foods Toolkit

Jumping off point for other health initiatives

Same principles can be used to reduce:

- Cholesterol
- Saturated fat
- Trans fat
- Added sugar
Together We’re Stronger

Keep the Wheels Turning

Continuing and expanding healthy hospital foods efforts through:

- **Partnerships to Improve Community Health (PICH) program; funded by the CDC**
- Engaged 12 hospitals in 8 counties across the state
Thank you!

“Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food.”

Hippocrates
For more information please contact:

Nicole King
Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems
Healthy Foodservice Coordinator
nking@emhs.org