

The Oasis Institute

Virtual Healthy Habits (VHH)

American Society on Aging
On Aging Conference
Atlanta, GA

 March 27-30, 2023

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Presenters



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St. Louis Oasis



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Aging Ahead





“This project was supported, in part by grant number 90INNU0022, from the Administration for Community Living, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects with government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official ACL policy.”





Group Questions

- What virtual educational programs do you currently offer in your community?
- Are you currently implementing a nutrition education program in your community?





Project Overview

- Funded by **Administration for Community Living** under the “Innovations in Nutrition Research” grant
- **Research Goal:** Randomized control trial assesses participant changes in knowledge, self-efficacy, attitudes, and behaviors related to dietary guidelines and healthy eating; and social connectedness
- The project includes partnerships with:
 - **Aging Ahead** to assist with recipe development, participant recruitment, and implementation
 - **Texas A&M University** to assist with evaluation





Project Overview

- Create the Virtual Healthy Habits Program
- Create research protocol and evaluation methodology
- Develop program material:
 - Facilitator manual
 - Participant workbook
 - Cooking videos
 - Training manuals
 - Implementation and fidelity manuals
- Establish sustainable models for meal kit/ grocery delivery
- Analyze results and disseminate findings





What is Virtual Healthy Habits?

- **Virtually Healthy Habits (VHH)** is a virtual, interactive group-based program designed for older adults to learn about healthy nutrition and provide an opportunity for social engagement





Virtual Healthy Habits Goals & Objectives

Program Goal:

- To educate older adults about current dietary guidelines and assist with behavior change to match the **MyPlate** method designed by the **U.S. Department of Agriculture** and offer an opportunity to prepare and enjoy a nutritious meal in the company of other older adults

Program Objectives:

- **Increase** knowledge about dietary guidelines and healthy eating
- **Improve** attitudes and self-efficacy towards healthy eating
- **Improve** eating behaviors to match current dietary guidelines
- **Decrease** nutritional risk
- **Increase** Social connectedness





Program Design

- 10-session program, classes are held twice a week for 5 weeks
- Led by a trained lay-leader
- Zoom and phone groups available
- Groups are highly interactive
- 4-10 participants per group
- Participants get to learn through reading, sharing, and practicing





Program Design





Weekly Education Sessions

- MyPlate for Older Adults developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025
- Educational sessions are 2 hours long
- Weekly topics:
 - Week 1: Introduction to Healthy Eating, Fruits, and Vegetables
 - Week 2: Whole Grains and Fiber
 - Week 3: Protein, Dairy, and Eating Healthy on a Budget
 - Week 4: Sugar and Fluids
 - Week 5: Fat and Salt





Weekly Social Sessions

- Meant for participants to come together and socialize on weekly meals prepared, pre-selected topics, or any topic the group is interested in
- Most conversations tend to be around the weekly meal's participants prepared
- Participants are encouraged to have their prepared meals during the social session (but not required)





Weekly Grocery/Meal Kit Delivery

- Groceries/ meal delivered to participants to prepare a healthy meal at home based on recipe they selected
 - Participants pre-select meals during the registration process
- Recipes meet federal guidelines for older adult nutrition per Older American Act Title III-C guidelines
- 20 total recipe options with 10 dessert options
 - Chicken (5 options)
 - Beef (5 options)
 - Pork (5 options)
 - Vegetarian (5 options)
- Each week participants have a choice of chicken, beef, pork, or vegetarian





Weekly Grocery/Meal Kit Delivery

- Fresh groceries/ meal kits are delivered weekly to participants
- Delivery options could be Instacart, volunteers, or through the Area Agencies on Aging
- Participants have access to the recipe book (participant workbook) and professional recorded cooking demo videos (website)





Examples of recipes:

- **Chicken:** Strawberry Pecan Salad with Chicken
- **Beef:** Ground Beef Burrito Bowls
- **Pork:** Sesame-Style Pork Lettuce Wraps
- **Vegetarian:** Creamy One-Pot Vegetable Pasta
- **Dessert:** Frozen Chocolate Banana–Berry Clusters





Recipe Book Development

Brooke Grubb MS, RD, LD

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Discussion Questions:

- Does your agency or program offer nutrition-based skill building courses or sessions?
- What barriers to access nutritious meals do you observe in your service area?

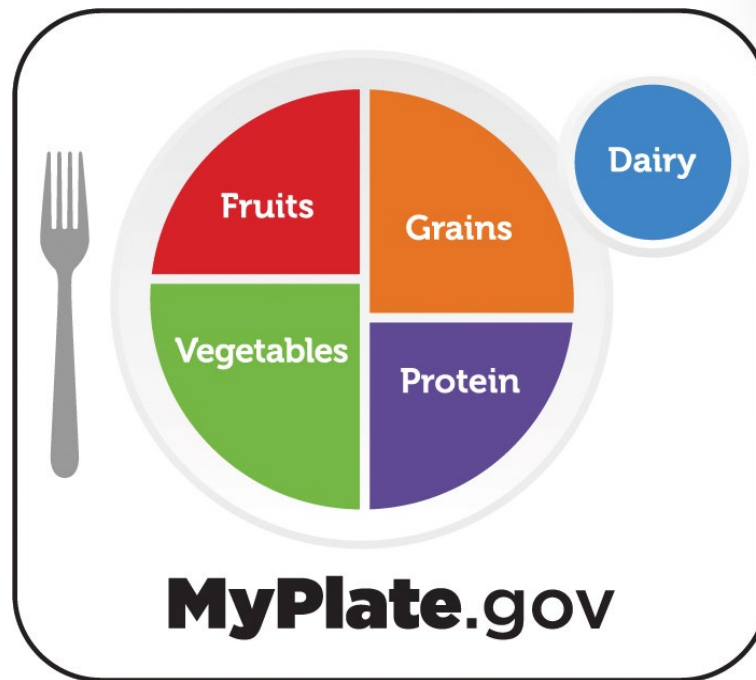


MO OAA Nutrition Program Requirements

Based on dietary recommendations for an average 70-year-old

Meal Pattern:

- 2-3 oz Protein
- 2.5 cups servings of vegetables
- 4 oz Fruit
- 2 oz Grain
- 8 oz Dairy





Virtual Healthy Habits Menu Building

Project Needs:

- Meals that meet OAA nutrition requirements
- Meals that were relatively easy to prepare
- Offers a variety of foods and styles of cuisine
- Ability to cook all items in a cooking demo





Recipe Considerations

- Variety
- Cost and Accessibility
- Offering foods clients would be familiar with
- Minimal equipment
- Time and efficiency
- Ease of use and potential barriers to cooking at a certain age
- Menu requirements and nutrition criteria
- Align with the VHH lesson plan





Recipe Development

- Includes all considerations above
- Begin with a protein and build out
- Inspired by cookbooks, websites, and family recipes
- Participant feedback welcomed
- Ongoing expansion of the recipe book

STRAWBERRY PECAN SALAD WITH CHICKEN & TOASTED PITA WEDGES



INGREDIENTS

6 oz Boneless Skinless
Chicken Breast (cut into
bite-sized pieces)
1 cup Strawberries (sliced)
2 cups Mixed Greens
1 Small Red Pepper (diced)
¼ cup Chopped Pecans
¼ cup Feta Cheese Crumbles
2 Whole Grain Pita Rounds
2 Tbsp Balsamic Vinegar
2 Tbsp Honey
¼ cup Olive Oil
1 tsp Dried Parsley

Spice Blend:

Salt & Pepper (to taste)
1 tsp Onion Powder
1 tsp Paprika

ALLERGENS

Wheat, Dairy,
Tree Nuts

BEFORE YOU START

Wash all vegetables. Cut green leafy tops from strawberries before slicing length-wise to create slices. Cut around top of pepper to remove seeds. Turn pepper upside down and shake to remove remaining seeds. Cut bottom off of pepper and cut pepper in half. Lay sides inside-down on cutting board and make cuts from top to bottom, then turn and cut from side to side to dice pepper.

Cut chicken into bite sized pieces (no greater than 1"). Wash hands after handling meats.

DIRECTIONS

Step 1: In a medium saucepan, heat 2 Tbsp olive oil on medium-high heat. Cover chicken pieces in spice blend and 1 tbsp of oil to coat chicken evenly and add to pan. Cook chicken for 8-10 minutes or until golden brown on all sides. Remove from heat.

Step 2: Preheat oven to 350F. Brush pita rounds on both sides with about 2-3 Tbsp olive oil. Sprinkle with dried parsley. Place on baking sheet and bake in oven for 5 minutes or until rounds are golden brown. Pull from oven and cut into triangles.

Step 3: In a small bowl, whisk together equal parts oil and balsamic vinegar, then stir in honey until completely blended.

Step 4: To serve, place 1 cup mixed greens in a large bowl, top with diced red pepper and strawberries, then pecans and feta. Finally, top with chicken and drizzle balsamic vinaigrette. Serve alongside warm pita triangles.



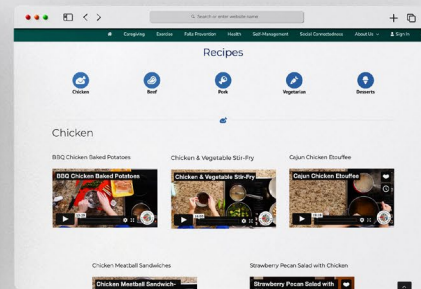


Program Material: Participant Workbook



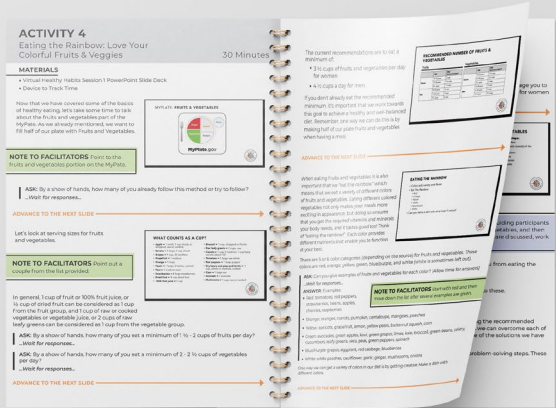


Program Material: Cooking Demonstrations



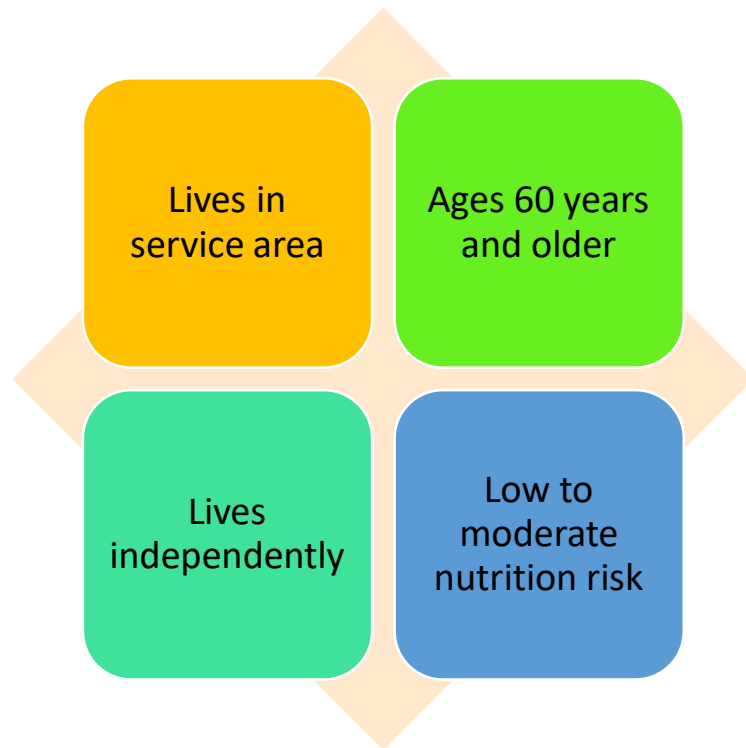


Program Material: Facilitator Guide





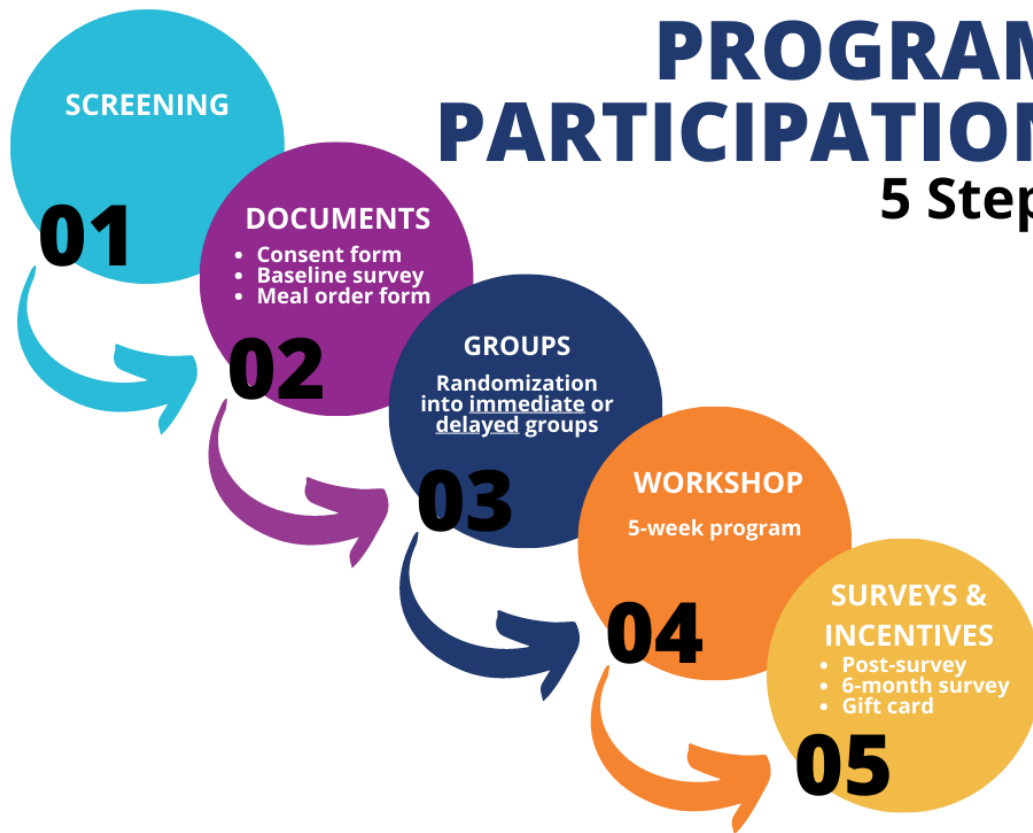
Target Population





PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

5 Steps







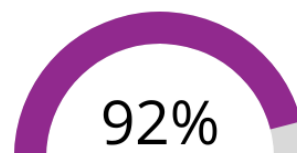
PARTICIPANTS SURVEY COMPLETION



Baseline survey



Post-survey



6-month
follow-up survey





Testing the Secret Sauce

Matthew Lee Smith, PhD, MPH, CHES

School of Public Health

Center for Community Health and Aging

Center for Health Equity and Evaluation Research

Texas A&M University

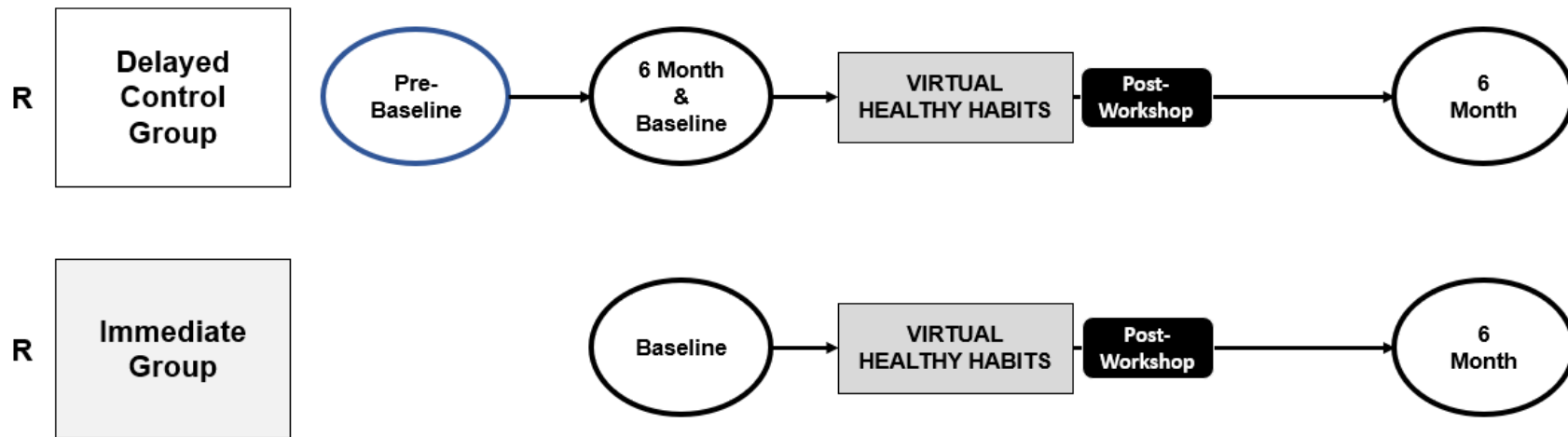


School of
Public Health





A Randomized Trial

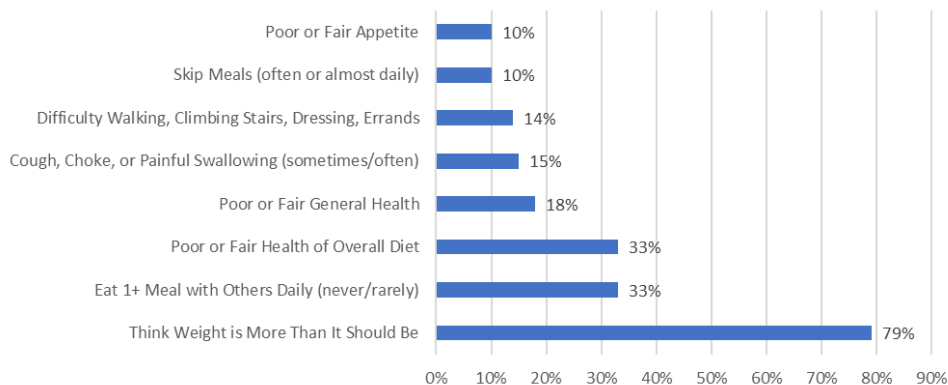




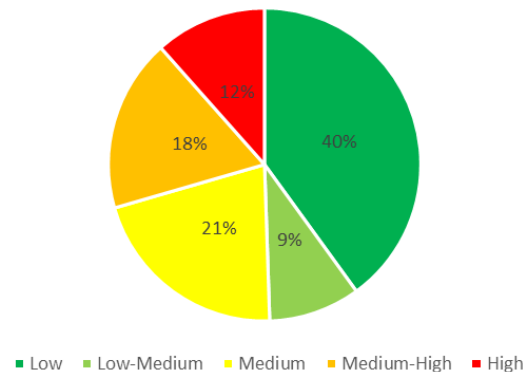
Participants at Baseline (n=104)

- On average, age 71 (range from 55 to 90)
- 83% Female
- 71% Non-Hispanic white
- 27% Black or African American
- 52% Live alone

Health- and Nutrition-Related Risk



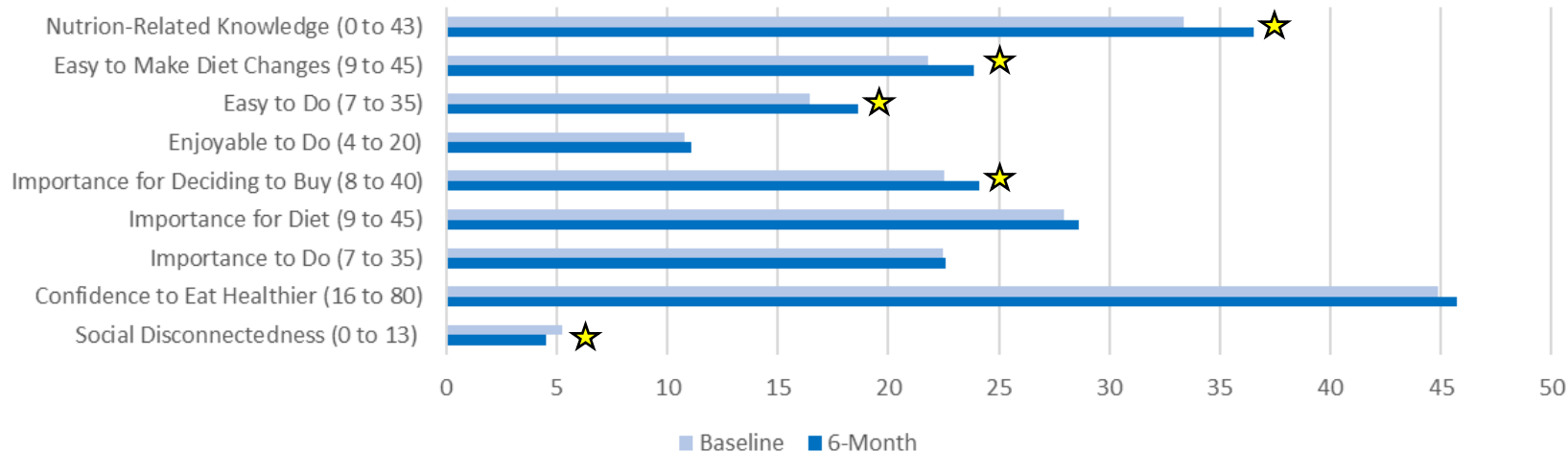
Baseline U-SIRS-13 Risk Categories (n=95)





Benefits Over Time

Scale Improvement from Baseline to 6-Month Follow-Up



**Sustained benefits
trending in the 'right
direction' after 6 months**

Significant improvements also seen for: General Health Status

- Health of overall diet
- Daily fruit consumption
- Eat more meals with others
- Daily fluid intake





Participant Feedback





Participant Quotes:

“Wonderful program. Enjoyed it very much!”

“I really enjoyed having good, high-quality food and motivation to prepare it.”

“This was a wonderful experience for me. I am much more aware of healthy eating and being proactive about my choices for better physical well being!”

“THANK YOU!! for this opportunity! It was a highlight of my summer! I have recommended this class to my sister, and she is now enrolled!”

“I have learned and reviewed so much to provide healthy eating and living habits. Sharing with other participants made the whole idea of the program easier.”

“Really a wonderful program for adults. Even at my age I gained a lot of information that I thought was very helpful. A very excellent program.”

“Overall, it was a good class. I learned about cooking new recipes, with food items that I would have never picked out to cook myself. I enjoyed the class size, the discussions about the weekly topics and hearing about how the recipes turned out. It was a wonderful experience!”

“I would like to express my deep appreciation for this program. It was highly recommended by a family member. Garrett and I have been rather isolated as he had knee replacement surgery and has been consigned to the house for 2 weeks. This program was a gift- for the companionship, the instruction and the food when I only got out once to get groceries in over 2 weeks as needed to stay home with my husband during his recuperation. Many thanks.”



Emir Kandzetic



Stay in Touch

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<https://st-louis.oasisnet.org/health/virtual-healthy-habits/>

