

Facilitator's Guide



Nourish to Flourish
SOUTH CAROLINA

July 2026



South Carolina
**DEPARTMENT
ON AGING**

Bright Bites: Fruits & Veggies for Vitality

Program Overview: This interactive session helps older adults understand the health benefits of eating a colorful variety of fruits and vegetables and gives practical, affordable, and realistic strategies for adding more produce to daily meals and snacks. The session emphasizes simple behavior changes, farmers market access, and budget-friendly options.

The tone should be positive, practical, and encouraging — not restrictive. Focus on progress, not perfection.

Behavior Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. **Name at least three health benefits** of eating a variety of fruits and vegetables.
2. **Identify at least three color groups** of produce and their health benefits.
3. **Describe two ways** to add fruits or vegetables to meals or snacks.
4. **State one place** where they can purchase or access fresh produce locally.
5. **Commit to one personal Nourish to Flourish action step** to increase fruit and vegetable intake this week.

Key Messages for Facilitators

- Aim for 3 servings of vegetables and 2 servings of fruit daily.
- Color = nutrients + protective plant compounds (phytochemicals).
- Fresh, frozen, canned (low sodium), and dried options all count.
- Small changes throughout the day add up.
- Farmers markets can be affordable and accessible.
- SNAP and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) benefits may help stretch food dollars.

Meeting Preparation

Materials Needed

- Printed newsletters for participants
- Sheets of paper in the following colors: Red, Orange & Yellow, Green, White & Brown, Blue & Purple

Resources:

Certified Roadside Markets

State Farmers Markets

Community-based Farmers Markets

FoodShare South Carolina

DSS Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program Webpage

Optional Props (Highly Recommended)

- Fresh produce in multiple colors
- Farmers market insulated tote bag or cooler bag

Welcome & Icebreaker

Facilitator Prompt

“Today, we’re talking about one of the simplest ways to support health and energy — adding more colorful fruits and vegetables to our meals.”

Icebreaker Question: Ask participants...

- “What is your favorite fruit or vegetable?”
- “How do you like to prepare it?”

Write answers on the board or paper. Point out color variety as responses are shared.

- Transition:

“Notice how many different colors we already named — that color variety is exactly what supports our health.”

Teaching Segment: Why Fruits & Vegetables Matter

Teaching Points

- Support heart, brain, immune system, digestion
- Help manage chronic disease risk
- Provide fiber, vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals
- Health benefits increase with variety and color

Facilitator Prompt: “As we age, our bodies benefit even more from nutrient-dense foods. Fruits and vegetables give us more nutrition per bite.”

Ask:

- “What changes have you noticed in your appetite or digestion as you’ve gotten older?”
- “Have any of you increased produce intake for health reasons?”

Acknowledge all responses positively.

Eat the Rainbow Section

Use colorful sheets of paper.

Explain that different colors provide different protective compounds. Hold up each color of paper while describing each category.



Color Groups Overview

Red: heart & brain support — tomatoes, strawberries, beets

Orange/Yellow: eye & immune health — carrots, sweet potatoes

Green: bone & cancer protection — spinach, broccoli

White/Brown: heart & blood pressure — garlic, onions, mushrooms

Blue/Purple: brain & memory — blueberries, purple cabbage

Discuss:

- “Which colors do you eat most often?”
- “Which colors are missing from your meals?”

Reinforce: balance over time — not every meal must include all colors.

Mix, Match, Munch: Easy Ways to Add Produce

Walk through daily meals.

Facilitator Demonstration Prompts

Breakfast

“Who has added fruit to cereal or oatmeal before?”

Show examples.

Lunch

“What vegetables could you add to a sandwich?”

Snacks

“What’s an easy grab-and-go fruit?”

Dinner

“Frozen vegetables are just as nutritious — who uses them?”

Label Tip Discussion

Show canned soup label.

Ask:

“What should we look for in sodium?”

Answer: lower sodium options when possible.

Resource: <https://www.heart.org/-/media/Files/Health-Topics/Heart-Failure/Reading-Food-Labels.pdf>

Farmers Market & Produce Access

Talking Points

- Fresher, peak-picked produce
- Talk directly with growers
- Social experience
- Often better flavor



Demonstrate Props

Show:

- Reusable tote bag
- How to place heavy items on bottom
- Small cooler for warm days

Benefit Access Talking Points

Explain clearly:

- Many markets accept **SNAP/EBT**
- Healthy Bucks may add extra produce dollars
- **Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP):**
 - Age 60+
 - Income guidelines apply
 - Seasonal \$50 vouchers
 - Authorized markets & roadside stands

Facilitator Prompt

“Has anyone here used a farmers market voucher or SNAP at a market?”

Let participants share experiences.

Optional:

Tasting Activity — Carrot, Apple, and Raisin Salad

Make ahead of time (chill)

Serves 20 (small portions in Dixie cups)

- 18 carrots, shredded
- 6 apples, chopped
- 1 cup raisins
- 18 ounces low-fat vanilla yogurt

Additional Supplies Needed:

- Dixie cups (20+)
- Spoons or tasting forks
- Gloves for safe food handling
- Napkins

Instructions:

- In a medium bowl, mix together carrots, apples, raisins, and yogurt.
- Cover and refrigerate for several hours for flavors to blend.



Discussion Prompts (Use Throughout)

- “What makes it hard to eat more vegetables?”
- “What makes it easier?”
- “What color groups are we eating from?”
- “How are these color groups good for our bodies?”
- “What’s one new produce item you might try?”

Affirm barriers and suggest small steps.

Call to Action Section

Have participants volunteer to tell their Nourish to Flourish action item out loud.

Action Examples

- Add fruit to breakfast 3 days this week
- Try one new vegetable
- Visit a farmer’s market
- Add a vegetable side at dinner
- Keep frozen vegetables stocked

Facilitator Prompt

“Small steps create lasting habits. Choose one change you feel confident you can make this week.”

Invite volunteers to share.

Encourage peer accountability.

Facilitator Tips for Success

- Use plain language
- Encourage storytelling and sharing
- Avoid judgment about food choices
- Emphasize progress, not perfection
- Keep discussion practical and budget-aware
- Allow extra time for participant interaction
- Use visuals — older adults benefit from concrete examples

Closing Script

“Eating more colorful fruits and vegetables is one of the most powerful and affordable ways to support health at any age. Every color adds protection, every serving adds strength, and every small change matters. Thank you for sharing and participating today.”

