

# Cooking up Collaboration: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Promote Success in the Kitchen for Individuals with Multiple Sclerosis

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## INTRODUCTION

Healthy eating can be challenging for people with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). In addition to misinformation on MS diets, people with MS have additional challenges including fatigue and physical and cognitive symptoms. This impacts their ability to meal plan, grocery shop, and prepare meals. Collaboration between Dietitians (RD), Occupational Therapists (OT) and the YMCA/Wellness Centre located within the hospital allows for a unique and holistic approach to tackling these challenges in the kitchen.

## GOAL

Provide practical skills and knowledge in an interactive group format to increase participants' confidence in the kitchen and ability to prepare healthy meals.



The Wellness Centre Kitchen at South Health Campus (workshop location)

## DESCRIPTION

Fun, interactive and informal cooking workshops were designed by an RD and OT. Specific healthy recipes were chosen to highlight concepts such as energy conservation, cognitive compensatory strategies, use of adaptive kitchen devices, healthy eating choices, and the benefits of specific nutrients in MS. The focus was on nutrient dense, balanced meals with discussions around debunking food myths and fad diets. Food samples were provided at the end of each class, which allowed for unstructured time for participants to connect with each other and the Healthcare Providers.

## RESULTS

Participants completed program evaluations. Data was collected over the course of 14 separate cooking classes. There were 109 responses in total. Participants felt that they learned a significant amount (4.3/5) and were satisfied with the class (4.8/5). They reported feeling more confident in their ability to plan and prepare healthy recipes. The group structure also allowed for a supportive environment in which participants felt normalized in their experiences and were comfortable in sharing their personal successes and struggles. Based on the feedback, an additional hands-on class that enables participants to use and trial adapted cooking devices has been developed. Finally, the ongoing successful collaboration with the YMCA/Wellness Centre led to participants gaining free passes to the YMCA.



The cooking classes

### Cooking Tips

#### Kitchen Set-up

- Rearrange your cupboards so that the objects you use most frequently are handy and you don't have to reach or bend.
- Use lazy susans or slide-out trays to make items more accessible in drawers or cupboards.
- Consider leaving your favourite pot or pan on the stove top for quick and easy access.
- Use light weight pans.
- Buy ergonomic kitchen gadgets. Many are available at local kitchen stores. Things you might want to consider include: a jar opener, non-slip mat, an electric can opener, a food processor or good quality blender, large handled utensils including ladles and spatulas, and a kitchen cart for transporting items.

#### Meal Planning

- Plan your meals for the week. Write down all the ingredients you need to buy to help make a grocery list.
- Plan to make enough for leftovers.
- On busy days, plan on heating leftovers or using a slow cooker that night for supper.
- Consider using pre-chopped foods, frozen foods, or packaged foods.
- Choose to make one-dish meals or easy to prepare meals.

#### Grocery Shopping

- After planning out your meals, make a grocery list and buy items for the whole week. This will save time and energy.
- Strategically plan your trip to the grocery store. When you are making your grocery list, group similar items together (fruits and vegetables, canned goods, bakery items, frozen items, dairy, etc).
- Use a grocery shopping app or a pre-made grocery list to help stay organized. You can create one on your computer and print a blank one for every new week.
- Use a motorized shopping cart if available (you may want to call ahead and reserve it).
- Avoid going grocery shopping at busy times. Plan to shop when your energy level is high.
- Ask baggers not to make bags too heavy.
- Get help carrying and loading your groceries into your vehicle.
- Some grocery stores offer a delivery service. Ask at the customer service desk.

#### Cooking

- Prepare food in stages if possible.
- Set up the kitchen before you start. Bring all the items you will need to a central area in your kitchen.
- Use a trolley or kitchen cart for transporting items around the kitchen.
- Sit during food preparation (i.e. chopping, peeling). Have a discard bowl next to you for peels/seeds/etc instead of making trips back and forth to the garbage.
- Recruit a sous-chef to help with preparation. This can be a great way to teach children how to cook and also to spend quality time with a partner, friend or child.
- Be wary of getting too hot when working over the stove. Have a cool beverage nearby and take breaks away from the hot surfaces.
- Consider investing in a stool that allows you to sit while at the stove.
- Use kitchen devices (i.e. flippers, spoons) with large handles, or build up your devices with built-up foam.
- Line your cooking pans with aluminum foil or parchment paper. This will make clean-up easier.
- Consider wearing an apron with pockets to carry items easily.

#### Clean Up

- If possible recruit someone else to clean up.
- Soak pots and pans in soapy water to make cleaning easier.
- Use a dishwasher instead of washing items by hand.
- Let items drip-dry in a rack instead of drying them yourself.
- Find easy-to-open glass containers to store leftovers in so you can pop them back in the oven or microwave.

#### Eating

- If your plate moves around, use a non-slip mat or a piece of dychem underneath.
- If you have poor hand strength or dexterity, use pieces of built-up foam on your utensils or buy built-up utensils from a healthcare store.
- Rockers knives are helpful for one-handed cutting.

Weekly Meals						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Lunch:</b> Hardboiled egg Veggies & hummus Cheese & crackers	<b>Lunch:</b> Quinoa Pilaf	<b>Lunch:</b> Quinoa Pilaf	<b>Lunch:</b> Sandwich (leftover chicken breast) Baby carrots	<b>Lunch:</b> Asian Spelt salad (made with pre-made frozen spelt)	<b>Lunch:</b> Spelt salad	<b>Lunch:</b> Spelt salad
<b>Dinner:</b> Baked salmon fillet Steamed broccoli Quinoa Pilaf *make extra quinoa & freeze	<b>Dinner:</b> Spaghetti Jarred tomato sauce with added frozen celery, peppers and onions	<b>Dinner:</b> Baked chicken breast Microwaved frozen mixed vegetables Baked potato	<b>Dinner:</b> Veggie omelet Toast	<b>Dinner:</b> Tuna melts Bell pepper slices	<b>Dinner:</b> Take out	<b>Dinner:</b> Grilled pork tenderloin Grilled asparagus and peppers Grilled yam (wrapped in foil)

#### Grocery Shopping List

Vegetables	Fruit	Meats and Fish	Frozen	Snacks	Miscellaneous	Household
<input type="checkbox"/> Baby carrots <input type="checkbox"/> Cherry or grape tomatoes <input type="checkbox"/> Celery <input type="checkbox"/> Asparagus <input type="checkbox"/> Bell peppers <input type="checkbox"/> Grated carrot <input type="checkbox"/> Shallots <input type="checkbox"/> Lemon <input type="checkbox"/> Lime <input type="checkbox"/> Green onion <input type="checkbox"/> Potatoes <input type="checkbox"/> Yam <input type="checkbox"/> Garlic <input type="checkbox"/> Cucumber <input type="checkbox"/> Bananas <input type="checkbox"/> Apples	<input type="checkbox"/> Apple <input type="checkbox"/> Banana <input type="checkbox"/> Oranges <input type="checkbox"/> Blueberries <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <b>Bakery/grains</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Quinoa <input type="checkbox"/> Spelt <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Wheat bread <input type="checkbox"/> Spaghetti	<input type="checkbox"/> Salmon fillet (fresh or frozen) <input type="checkbox"/> Pork tenderloin <input type="checkbox"/> Chicken breast (value pack and freeze in portions) <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <b>Dairy Section</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Milk <input type="checkbox"/> Yogurt <input type="checkbox"/> Eggs <input type="checkbox"/> Cheese <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Diced celery, peppers and onion <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed vegetables <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <b>Canned Goods</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Tomato sauce <input type="checkbox"/> Light tuna <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Hummus <input type="checkbox"/> Whole grain crackers <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <b>Baking Supplies</b> <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <b>Hygiene</b> <input type="checkbox"/> toothpaste <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> dish soap <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____

Handout: Sample Meal Planning



Some of the adapted devices demonstrated

## CONCLUSION

The cooking workshops provide a unique opportunity for collaboration between RD, OT, and the local hospital YMCA/Wellness Centre. Participants were provided with a comprehensive and supportive approach to managing challenges in the kitchen brought on by their MS. Based on the incredible feedback and participant satisfaction, these workshops have been expanded and will continue to be offered.

Handout: Cooking Tips for People with MS