



Seniors Taking Charge of Your Health!

Lesson 6: Friends Helping Friends

Getting Ready

1. Review the lesson plan and read the educator resources before each session.
2. Prepare to do chair exercises. Choose Module C with balls (found elsewhere in this document) or Tufts/CDC Growing Stronger, Part II (a separate booklet or online at: http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/growing_stronger/growing_stronger.pdf).
3. Make copies of chair exercise guide for participants to take home (if not done so already).
4. Copy and staple the handouts that best meet the needs of your audience (one set for each participant).
5. Gather supplies needed for lesson, recipe, and activities.

General Supplies

1. Handouts for participants.
2. Pens or pencils for participants to write on the handouts.
3. Balls for chair exercises (foam will not bounce as much as air-filled, so foam balls may be a better choice). Optional: step counters to replace those that are lost or broken.

Supplies When Preparing a Recipe for Participants (Strongly Recommended)

1. Ingredients to prepare the recipe provided or another healthy recipe.
2. Supplies for tasting recipe, such as plates, forks or spoons, and napkins.

Beginning the Session

1. Introduce yourself by name and the organization that you represent. Take attendance.
2. Summarize the lesson by going over the objectives. Let the group know that the session will be informal and that questions can be asked at any time.

Objectives for participants

1. Know the benefits of social and emotional support while managing a health condition.
2. Learn how to identify and develop a personal support system.
3. Be familiar with the types of support groups offered in the community.
4. Learn how to locate and chose a support group.
5. Do chair exercises, complete physical activity charts, and set new physical activity goals.

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Menus and Physical Activity Programs

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Educator Resources

Before presenting the lesson, read these resources that were used to prepare this lesson:

- The American Stroke Association, Stroke Support Groups
<http://www.strokeassociation.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4730>.
- The American Stroke Association, Successful Stroke Support Groups,
<http://www.strokeassociation.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3022731>.
- American Cancer Society, Support Groups: General Information,
[http://www.cancer.org/docroot/ESN/content/ESN_2_3X_Support_groups_general_informati
on.asp?sitearea=&level=](http://www.cancer.org/docroot/ESN/content/ESN_2_3X_Support_groups_general_informati
on.asp?sitearea=&level=).
- American Cancer Society: Support Groups: General Information.
[http://www.cancer.org/docroot/ESN/content/ESN_2_3X_Support_groups_general_informati
on.asp?sitearea=&level=](http://www.cancer.org/docroot/ESN/content/ESN_2_3X_Support_groups_general_informati
on.asp?sitearea=&level=).
- American Diabetes Association. Contact Us. <http://www.diabetes.org/contactus.jsp>.
- American Heart Association. Mended Hearts/Support Groups,
<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4654>.
- American Stroke Association. *Successful Stroke Support Groups*,
[http://www.strokeassociation.org/downloadable/stroke/1087414337251SuccessfulStrokeSup
portGroups.pdf](http://www.strokeassociation.org/downloadable/stroke/1087414337251SuccessfulStrokeSup
portGroups.pdf).
- Blazer, D.G. Self-efficacy and depression in late life: a primary prevention proposal. *Aging and Mental Health*. 2002;6(4):315-324, abstract available online.
- Breitbart, W. Spirituality and meaning in supportive care: spirituality- and meaning-centered group psychotherapy interventions in advanced cancer. *Supportive Care in Cancer*. 2002;10(4):272-280, , abstract available online.
- Docherty, A. Experience, functions and benefits of a cancer support group. *Patient Education and Counseling*. 2004;55:87-93, abstract available online.
- Georgia Department of Human Resources. Division of Aging Services launches statewide access line to the Aging Network,
[http://www.dhr.state.ga.us/portal/site/DHR/menuitem.3d43c0fad7b3111b50c8798dd03036a0
/?vgnextoid=39f300cc1b0b3110VgnVCM100000bf01010aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=1c29e1d
09cb4ff00VgnVCM100000bf01010aRCRD](http://www.dhr.state.ga.us/portal/site/DHR/menuitem.3d43c0fad7b3111b50c8798dd03036a0
/?vgnextoid=39f300cc1b0b3110VgnVCM100000bf01010aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=1c29e1d
09cb4ff00VgnVCM100000bf01010aRCRD).
- GriefShare, Homepage, <http://www.griefshare.org/>.

Script

*Remember to take attendance.
Give participants their handouts.*

Introduction

It is wonderful to see everyone. To review what we have been talking about, let's look at our handout called "*Seniors Taking Charge of Your Health!*" and discuss ways you eat to stay healthy. *Wait for responses.* What are some things you enjoy to stay physically and mentally active? *Wait for responses.* What do you do to help be positive and cheerful? *Wait for responses.* Good ideas! What are some check-ups we need? Yes! Checking your feet daily is especially important for those with diabetes. Ask your doctor how often your blood pressure, blood cholesterol, blood sugar, and body weight should be checked. If you have high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, or diabetes, then you will need these checked more often. Vision and hearing check-ups are very important, too. Having your doctor or pharmacist review your medications will help you avoid medication problems. Another important part of good health is washing your hands for at least 20 seconds before preparing foods and after using the bathroom. Proper hand washing helps decrease the risk of foodborne illness, colds, and the flu, especially in the winter season.

Today we're going to talk about the importance of "friends helping friends" to live healthier lifestyles and to prevent and manage common health problems. To start, we're going to help our friends by completing this cross-word puzzle called "Fun with Foods." You can work in groups or with a partner, just don't work alone. The object of this activity is to work together to solve a problem. Use all your resources within the group to complete this activity as we act out "friends helping friends." *Allow participants to work on cross-word puzzles.*

[Answers: Across 5. Turkey, 6. Cheese, 7. Spinach, 8. Carrots, 10. BlackeyedPeas, 12. Milk. Down: 1. PumpkinPie, 2. Cherry, 3. Apple, 4. PeachCobbler, 5. Tuna, 9. Lemon, 11. Pork.]

What does "friends helping friends" mean to you? *Wait for responses and discuss.* It's important to know that you are not alone when facing a health or other problem. Many people face the same challenges you face today. When these people come together to talk about these challenges, we commonly refer to them as support groups. A support group, whether formal or informal, can be a vital aspect of the prevention, management, and recovery from a health problem by providing emotional and social support. You can learn more about a health condition as well as helpful tips to manage it from those facing the same situations as you. There are support groups for cancer, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, grief, and many other conditions. They are in hospitals, community agencies, or even your own home! Can you name some support groups in your community? *Wait for responses and discuss.* What do you think a support group can do for you? *Wait for responses and discuss.*

Each of us should have a personal support system. This could include a support group. Your support group may be close family and friends, people from church, neighbors, your weekly bridge club, or even these people sitting in the room with you right now! We'll help you identify your personal support system as part of our session today.

Benefits of Support Groups

Let's look at the handout "How Do Support Groups Help You?"

Support groups can help improve our health in many ways. They help us make:

- Connections: Have you ever heard, "We are all in the same boat!"
 - A major function of support groups is to meet others with your same situation.
 - Some examples are:
 - Those recently diagnosed with diabetes can meet others with diabetes that are facing or have already made the same lifestyle changes;
 - Different support groups exist for those with different types of cancers due to the different challenges they face. For example, a woman with breast cancer compared to a man with prostate cancer.

Support groups are also helpful for getting:

- Tips and information: This is when you'll hear things like, "I tried this, and it works!"; "Here is where I go when I need that"; "The latest research shows that this is helpful."
 - Support groups are a great place to learn new ways to prevent or manage your health condition.
 - For example:
 - Healthy recipes can be exchanged at a diabetes support group or at a church social;
 - Where to find helpful resources;
 - Health professionals leading or guest speaking at a meeting can provide the latest information and dispel any myths.

Support groups also help with:

- Coping skills: It helps to hear others in your situation say, "I know how you feel. When that happened to me, I did this."
 - Many health conditions can cause a lot of stress due to lifestyle changes and/or disability.
 - Those who have been through what you are going through right now can provide support, empathy, and reassurance for this difficult time.
 - You can learn meditative skills and ways to reduce stress in your life.

Finally, support groups are a great source of:

- Motivation: "Change is tough, but I know you can do it!"
 - Groups can provide hope and encouragement in times of despair.
 - You can see examples of people who have already made these changes or have been through this situation.

Ask participants if they have any other ideas how support groups can help with prevention, management, and recovery of health conditions. Discuss.

Your Personal Support System

Everybody's comfort level is different, and not everyone is comfortable in a support group setting. Some feel more comfortable with a telephone-based support group, others like online groups, and still others prefer small neighborhood-based or faith-based groups. Some people have their own support system built in to their lives with close family and friends living nearby.

Now, turn to the handout called "My Personal Support System."

This worksheet can help you find the right support group for you. The first question asks what type of group you find most comfortable. There are large groups led by a health professional such as a nurse, dietitian, or other licensed individual. These groups are helpful for learning the most current information and recommendations regarding your health condition. Many people prefer a group led by peers with the same condition. This provides a comfortable atmosphere for airing out strong emotions regarding your situation and developing relationships. Some people who have limited mobility, little time, or prefer anonymity may need a telephone-based group, usually done by conference call, or an online group done in an internet chat room. Finally, some people are lucky enough to have close family and friends in their area that have experienced the same health condition and can provide the necessary social and emotional support. Is there another type of group that you feel most comfortable with? *Discuss any responses.* Please circle the type of group you feel is best for you.

The second question deals with the characteristics of many support groups. It's important to know which of these characteristics you prefer when selecting a support group. Many groups incorporate group therapy into their meetings, especially conditions that produce a lot of stress, such as cancer or grief. These are best led by a mental health professional. Open membership to a group means members can come and go to meetings as they please with no requirements to attend. These are helpful for those who need flexibility or may not be able to attend meetings due to illness. Closed membership requires you to register before attending meetings and have an attendance policy regarding meetings. These are less flexible, but they provide a more intimate group, because the same people are at every meeting. Other characteristics include peer support, educational classes, anonymity, and presence of a health professional that may or may not be the group leader. Please circle any of the characteristics you most prefer. You may circle more than one.

Next, there is a list of some places you can look for support groups. Other than those listed here, can anyone name any other resources for locating a support group? *Discuss responses.*

Finally, it's important to have a network of people close to you that you feel you can go to in times of crisis. These people can be siblings, religious leaders, close friends, relatives, a therapist, etc. Try to think of at least 3 people you trust that may act as part of your social and emotional support system.

Use this worksheet to help you find or start your own support group.

We can also build our own network right now. *Ask participants to look at the “Telephone Tree” handout.* Let’s create a telephone tree. A telephone tree is an organized system to alert your friends here at the senior center of a crisis that may occur in your life. Use this paper to create a tree with the names and numbers of your friends. Also, draw it so that each person has the responsibility to call one or two people until all have been alerted. Tell your family members your place in the tree, so if you are unable to alert the tree, a family member can do it for you. Remember to put the telephone number of the senior center near the top of your tree. *Allow participants to work on their trees.*

Another idea we can start here at the center (*if this system is not in place already*) is a “Sunshine Committee.” The job of the committee members is to send birthday cards, congratulations cards, flowers, and other notes to people here in the senior center. You can start a list of everyone’s names, addresses, telephone numbers, and birthdays and plan your own “Sunshine Committee.”

Where to Find Support Groups

For many people, this senior center is a great place to find and start your own support group. You can meet to talk about health challenges and provide feedback, advice, and encouragement to each other. Some may prefer to meet in a friend’s home or your own home. This is particularly helpful for those of you who may have homebound neighbors or friends since you can bring the support group to them. *Ask participants to look at the “Support Group Locator” handout.*

This handout has a list of some popular organizations with support groups associated with them. You probably recognize most of these groups.

- The American Heart Association is, of course, a very large organization with many programs available, including support groups.
- The American Cancer Society can connect you with support groups specific to each kind of cancer, such as breast cancer or prostate cancer. There are also many opportunities to connect with other cancer survivors through events and programs.
- The American Stroke Association has many support groups for caregivers as well as stroke survivors.
- Many local hospitals have diabetes support groups. The American Diabetes Association can help you find a group if you are having trouble locating one.
- GriefShare is an organization dedicated to supporting those who have lost a loved one. Also, many churches have this type of support group.
- Finally, the Georgia Aging Network can help you get in touch with other organizations that are helpful for seniors. Ask your senior center for advice.

Many of our friends are unable to attend the senior center as we do. What can we do to bring support to these homebound friends of ours? *Wait for responses and encourage discussion.* One idea is to be sure that meals are brought to homebound people. Thank you for sharing all your wonderful ideas today and I hope you will consider forming and joining a support group to meet your needs.

Menu and Recipe

To build on what we've learned today, let's turn to our healthy sample menu and recipe. Recipe exchanges and sharing meals with family and friends are great ways to stay connected with others, such as in a support group or other setting. Maybe you are part of a walking club or other organized group, and enjoy sharing meal and snack ideas to stay healthy. Several ideas for healthy eating are found on your handout titled "*Sample Menu #6.*" This menu has about 1,800 calories. You can encourage your friends to eat healthy by sharing fun and nutritious recipes like the one that goes with today's sample menu. Today's recipe is a healthy take on a classic. These easy buttermilk biscuits use low-fat buttermilk and a small amount of canola oil to give a great-tasting, but lower-fat biscuit. I hope you'll try making them at home, particularly if you like to eat biscuits often and would like a healthier alternative. *If a recipe is provided for participants to try, then be sure to tell participants what is in the recipe, in case anyone is allergic to any of the ingredients.*

Remember that our menus show healthy eating patterns with a variety of foods. Can anyone name some important food groups on our sample menu that we should eat everyday? *Wait for responses.* Right! At least seven servings of fruits and vegetables, at least three servings of whole grains, and three servings of low-fat milk products are all important for good health. Have you met your goals for these important foods in the past week? *Wait for responses.* Great! If you haven't, then setting a goal to eat more of these foods than you usually do is a good place to start. You can use some of the ideas for including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat milk products, and lean meats from our sample menu to help you plan meals and snacks. Remember to follow specific dietary restrictions or recommendations given to you by your physician, registered dietitian, pharmacist, or other health care professional.

Another part of keeping us healthy and strong is physical activity. Being physically active gives us the strength and energy that we need to support our friends and family, and offer help when they need us.

Be Physically Active Everyday!

Today we're going to work on our strength and flexibility using balls. First, has anyone written down their minutes of physical activity from last week? How did you do? *Wait for responses.* I hope you've found some fun ways to be more active, and recorded your minutes spent doing the physical activities you enjoy. It's encouraging to write down your accomplishments and see how much activity you've accumulated at the end of the week. To help us be more physically active, is everybody ready for some chair exercises using balls? Great! Let's get started.

Start the exercise session with a five to ten minute warm-up. Then, begin Exercise Module C (balls) or Tufts/CDC Growing Stronger, Part II.

NOTE: *For groups using step counters: Encourage the group to continue recording their daily steps in the Physical Activity Chart. Invite participants to share ways they've found to add more walking to their daily routine.*

Seniors Taking Charge of Your Health! (Lesson 6)

Eat Healthy

What are some foods you eat to help you stay healthy?

Today let's remember to provide meals to those in need, such as in times of stress or loneliness.



Be Active

What are some activities you do to stay physically and mentally active?

Friends, family and support groups can help us be physically active.



Be Positive

What are some things that cheer you up and help you enjoy life?

Friends, family and support groups can help us be positive, even in times of stress.



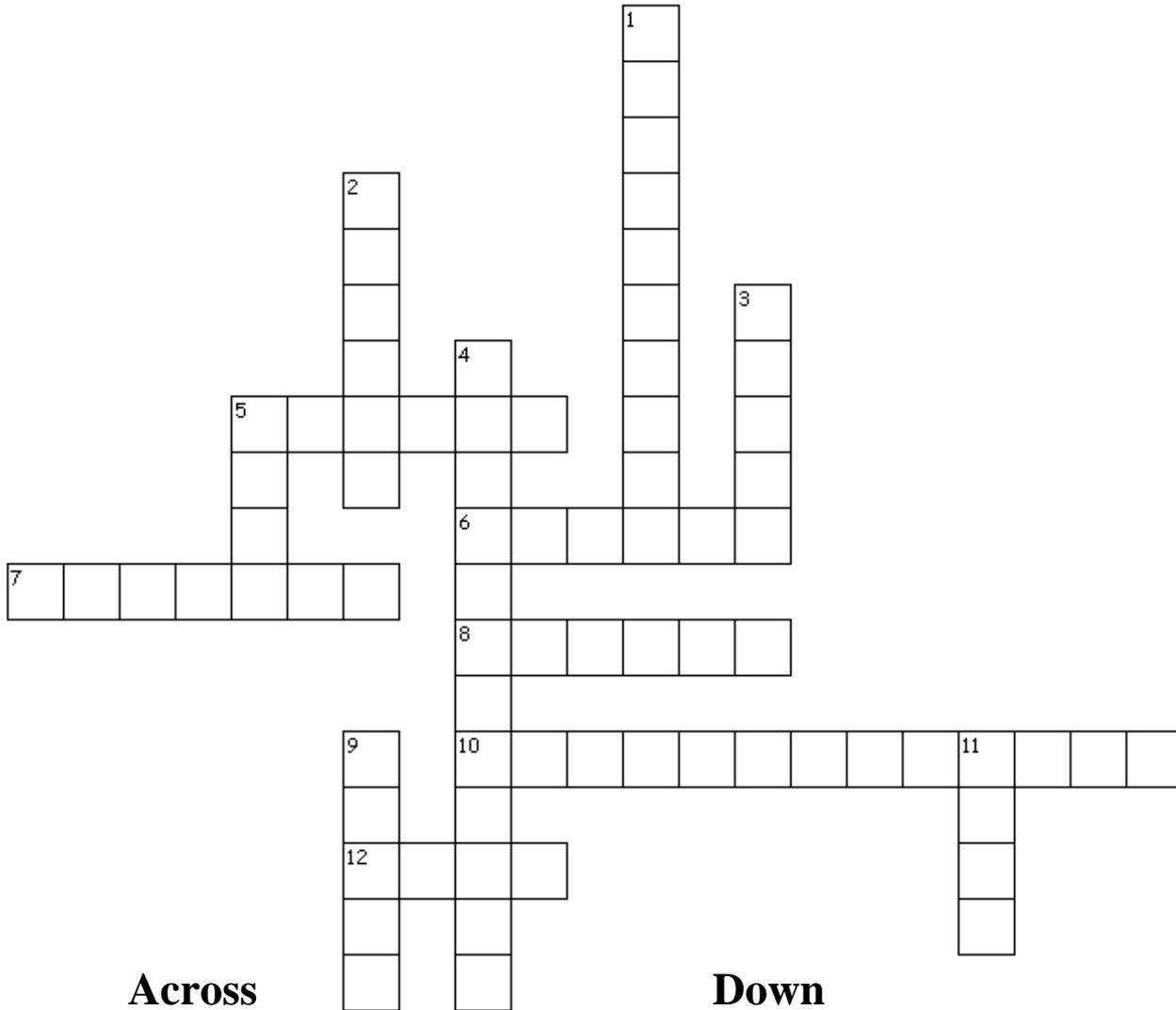
Get Checked

What are some check-ups we need?

Friends, family and support groups can remind us to have check-ups.



Fun with Foods



Across

- 5. Ben Franklin's national bird
- 6. Mousetrap bait
- 7. Popeye's muscle builder
- 8. Bugs Bunny's favorite
- 10. These peas must like to box!
- 12. "___y Way"

Down

- 1. Thanksgiving dessert
- 2. The tree George cut down
- 3. ___ of my eye
- 4. A Georgia shoemaker
- 5. Chicken of the sea
- 9. A junky car
- 11. Thanks to Charlotte, Wilbur's not this

How Do Support Groups Help You?

❖ Connections

- “We’re all in the same boat!”



❖ Tips and information

- “I tried this, and it works!”
- “Here is where I go when I need that.”
- “The latest research shows that this is helpful.”

❖ Coping skills

- “I know how you feel. When that happened to me, I did this.”
- “Tell me how you are feeling right now.”

❖ Motivation

- “Change is tough, but I know you can do it!”

❖ Other ways support groups can help:

- _____
- _____
- _____

My Personal Support System

1. I am most comfortable with (circle all that apply):
 - a. A formal group led by a health professional
 - b. A small group led by peers
 - c. A group meeting held over the telephone
 - d. An online group through a chat room
 - e. A small network of family and friends
 - f. Other: _____

2. I would like my group to include the following (circle all that apply):
 - a. Therapy
 - b. Open membership
 - c. Closed membership
 - d. Peer support
 - e. Education
 - f. Anonymity
 - g. Health professional present



3. Resources I can use to locate a support group (circle all that apply):
 - a. Local hospital
 - b. Local public health office
 - c. Community organizations
 - d. Church or synagogue or other faith-based group
 - e. Internet
 - f. Friend or neighbor
 - g. Other _____

4. List three people you feel comfortable talking to in times of crisis:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

5. Write your personal goal for creating and maintaining a support group:



The Telephone Tree



Create a telephone tree with a group of friends from your senior center. You can use this tree to alert your group of friends during crisis (hospitalization, death, other stressful events). Try to have at least 5 people on your tree. Designate who calls whom. Draw your telephone tree below. Write down full names and telephone numbers.

Your Name

Family and Friends

Senior Center

Relatives

Church

Doctor

Friends

Volunteers

Support Group Locator

You can call the telephone numbers listed below for help in locating a support group in your area:

American Heart Association

1-800-AHA-USA-1 (ask for Mended Hearts support)
(1-800-242-8721)

American Cancer Society

1-800-ACS-2345

American Stroke Association

800 Stroke Family “Warmline”
1-800-4-STROKE
(1-800-478-7653)

American Diabetes Association

1-800-DIABETES
(1-800-342-2383)

GriefShare

1-800-395-5755

Georgia Aging Network

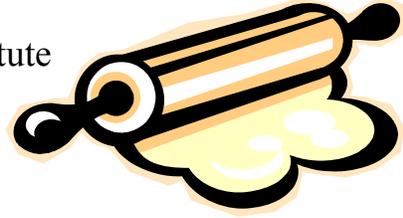
1-866-55-Aging
(1-866-552-4464)



Sample Menu #6

Breakfast

Better-For-You Buttermilk Biscuits (recipe provided)
Egg, 1 large, scrambled or boiled, or ¼ cup egg substitute
Milk, 1%, 1 cup
Coffee, 1 cup, with artificial sweetener if desired



Snack

Whole grain, ready-to-eat, unsweetened cereal (such as Cheerios®), ¾ cup
Orange juice, calcium- and vitamin D-fortified, ½ cup

Lunch

Chicken salad sandwich, made with 2 slices toasted whole wheat bread, 2 ounces skinless chicken breast chunks, 1 tablespoon reduced-fat mayonnaise, chopped celery, lettuce and tomato
Pinto beans, canned, rinsed and drained, heated, ½ cup
Pineapple chunks, canned in juice or water, drained, ½ cup

Snack

Broccoli, fresh or frozen, chopped, steamed, ½ cup, sprinkled with ¼ cup reduced-fat shredded cheese
Wheat crackers (such as Wheat Thins®), low-sodium variety, 15 crackers

Evening meal

Ham, lean, sliced, 2 ounces (lower-sodium variety preferred)
Sweet potato, cut into wedges, roasted, with 1 teaspoon canola oil, ½ large (or have ½ cup mashed sweet potatoes with 1 teaspoon soft margarine), sprinkled with cinnamon to taste
Green beans, frozen or fresh, steamed, ½ cup, with 1 teaspoon canola oil
Cornbread, 1 small square

Snack

Fruit parfait, made with ¾ cup low-fat and low-calorie yogurt, ½ cup fruit cocktail canned in juice or water, drained, and 2 tablespoons sliced almonds

*Remember to drink plenty of fluids throughout the day! Water, tea, coffee, small amounts of juice, and other liquids all can help to keep you hydrated.

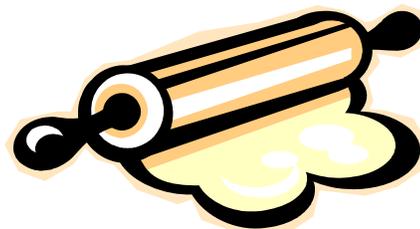
Better-for-You Buttermilk Biscuits

Adapted from NHLBI, the National Institutes of Health, 2003, Publication No. 03-2921

Serves 6 (6 biscuits)

Ingredients:

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/8 teaspoon each baking soda and salt
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/3 cup 1% low-fat buttermilk
- 1 1/2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1 tablespoon soft tub margarine
- 1/2 teaspoon dried rosemary (optional)



Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 450°F. Line a small baking pan with foil.
2. In a medium bowl, combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and sugar.
3. In a small bowl, stir together buttermilk and oil. Pour over the flour mixture and stir until well mixed.
4. On a lightly floured surface with floured hands, gently knead the dough for 10-12 strokes. Roll or pat dough to 3/4-inch thickness.
5. Cut rounds out of the dough using the rim of a small cup or a 2-inch biscuit cutter. Lay biscuits on the baking sheet.
6. Bake for about 5 minutes; remove and spread 1/2 teaspoon margarine on top of each biscuit. Bake for another 5 minutes until golden. Serve warm.



Try this!

Use leftover biscuits as the topping for your next chicken pot pie!

Estimated Nutrition Facts per serving:

125 calories
5 g total fat
1 g saturated fat
17 g carbohydrate
3 g protein
0.5 g fiber

Nutrient Analyses of Sample Menus

Day/ Nutrient	Calories	Total Fat (g)	Sat. Fat (g)	Total Carb. (g)	Protein (g)	Fiber (g)
Sample 1	1805	52	15	257	89	28
Sample 2	1751	56	17	228	95	34
Sample 3	1774	50	12	240	96	27
Sample 4	1831	60	15	240	93	34
Sample 5	1725	52	13	228	101	26
Sample 6	1773	58	15	234	88	27
Sample 7	1744	61	18	221	94	32
Sample 8	1763	53	13	235	99	30
Sample 9	1757	51	17	232	101	30
Sample 10	1768	56	15	227	101	26
Sample 11	1810	68	19	223	92	27
Sample 12	1750	50	14	242	100	31
Average	1771	56	15	235	96	29



Most of the sample menus provide nutrients in the ranges of:

- 1750 to 1850 calories
- 25% to 35% of total calories from fat
- 7% to 10% of total calories from saturated fat
- 50% to 60% of total calories from carbohydrate
- 20% to 25% of total calories from protein
- 25 to 35 grams of fiber

Nutrient analysis estimates were completed using Diet Analysis Plus, Version 6.1, from ESHA Research, 2004. Nutrient values for individual foods can vary depending on brand, type of processing, method of preparation, and other factors. Be sure to read the Nutrition Facts panel of food labels if you'd like to know exactly how much of specific nutrients are in the foods you buy.