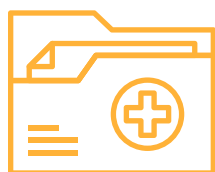


Sodium reduction in Linn County report

December 29, 2016

Problem



Heart disease and stroke are leading causes of death in the United States. According to the most recent statistics from Oregon's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 30,400 of Linn

County's estimated 90,000 adults (or more than one in three adults) had high blood pressure, a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. The latest data also attribute one in four of all deaths in Linn County to heart disease or stroke.

Reducing high blood pressure can decrease a person's risk of developing cardiovascular disease and other chronic health conditions. Decreasing sodium intake reduces and prevents high blood pressure. The majority of Americans exceed the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommendation of less than 2,300 milligrams (mg) of sodium per day. Since most dietary sodium comes from processed and restaurant foods, the availability and accessibility of lower sodium food products can greatly affect sodium intake.



Project Description

Linn County Public Health (LCPH) works to improve health for all in Linn County. This has included collaborating with Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital (SLCH) to improve the nutrition environment in the hospital through the Sodium Reduction in Communities Program (SRCP). The Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention launched the SRCP to reduce sodium intake by helping create healthier food environments at the local level.

Community-based efforts to reduce sodium are relatively new to public health and have few evidence-based implementation models. This grant provided the opportunity to discover promising best practices to a population-based approach to sodium reduction in the hospital setting.



LCPH and SLCH have partnered since 2013 to enhance the nutrition environment of the hospital's dining area (Rosie's Café), which included collaborating on the implementation of a sugar sweetened beverage reduction campaign. In addition, Samaritan Health Services' leadership had shown a commitment to wellness and improving the food system over the past five years. In 2011, SHS food venues began offering the Carrot Program. Their program supports and encourages healthy eating by identifying healthy items in the Samaritan Health Services' cafés by placing a "carrot" symbol next to their name. Employees are offered a discount for selecting food items that meet the Carrot Program criteria. Samaritan Health Plans reimburses the nutrition services departments when customers pick the carrot item.

Samaritan Health Services also adopted a system-wide Nutrition & Healthy Meeting Policy in 2014, and the organization was recognized as a platinum level fit friendly worksite by the American Heart Association. Recently, SHS was acknowledged as being the third Healthiest Employer in the nation, by the Healthiest 100 Workplaces in America program. SHS has also been recognized as Oregon's Healthiest Employer (1,500 or more employees) by the Portland Business Journal three times since 2012.

The Sodium Reduction Team included the LCPH healthy communities coordinator, SLCH nutrition services manager, hospital dietitian and certified dietary manager. The team met monthly and began the journey with an environmental assessment and a review of menu item nutrient content in order to identify opportunities to increase availability, accessibility and purchase of lower sodium products. The following areas to improve the nutrition environment and sodium content of food were identified and have been implemented over the last two years:

- Provide education to patrons and staff on high sodium foods and tips for lowering sodium in meals through the use of fresh herbs and spices.
- Modify menu items to reflect lower sodium content.
- Increase healthy product images in Rosie's Café through local photography.

The interior of Rosie's Café was freshened up with new paint and pictures of fresh fruits and vegetables from the local farmers market to inspire healthy food selections. The menu modifications implemented by café staff included replacing pre-packaged taco seasoning with no-sodium fresh herbs and spices, eliminating the addition of salt to the Philly sandwich meat, reformulating the ranch dressing recipe by replacing a portion of the mayonnaise with Greek yogurt, modifying the seasoning-to-liquid ratio in the au jus and replacing canned tomatoes with a lower sodium option.

The SLCH staff was essential to making this project a success. They were willing to accept the new responsibility of measuring each food item daily over three services to ensure quality data collection. In addition, the Sodium Reduction Team and café staff hosted a "Savor the Flavor" tasting and education to patrons and staff on hidden salt in food favorites. This included an opportunity for employees and patrons to taste test low sodium recipes and adjust the taste by adding fresh herbs, seasoning or sauces.

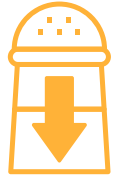


Above: Erin Sedlacek, healthy communities coordinator with Linn County Public Health; and Athena Nofziger, clinical dietitian with Samaritan Health Services

Outcomes

The Sodium Reduction Team successfully reduced the sodium content in the following items at Rosie's Café:

- Taco meat by 100 percent
- Ranch dressing by 52 percent
- Herbed artichoke tortellini by 41 percent
- Tostadas by 24 percent
- Au jus sauce by 20 percent
- Philly sandwich meat by 16 percent
- Eggplant parmesan by 16 percent
- Nachos by 14 percent



Conclusion

Sodium Reduction in Communities Program funding provided Linn County Public Health and Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital the opportunity to build upon their partnership and successfully reduced the sodium content in a variety of menu items in the hospital through simple modifications to popular items. Increasing the availability of low-sodium foods was a direct result of the hospital staff prioritizing sodium reduction efforts and being committed to the process. This experience emphasized the value of collaborating and partnerships to improve the nutrition environment in the retail setting.

For more information, please contact:

Linn County Public Health
P.O. Box 100, Albany, OR 97321
541-967-3888 ext. 2736
esedlacek@co.linn.or.us



**Samaritan
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Services**

