

## Nutrition Communication Techniques in Practice

### 5 TECHNIQUES TO ENHANCE NUTRITION COMMUNICATION

- 1. Use plain language:** Antioxidants, polyphenols, and nutrient-dense are jargon terms CDEs may be familiar with but won't necessarily enhance learning. Instead, use simple phrases or provide a glossary of new terms that may be introduced during class. For example, instead of saying "Drink low carbohydrate beverages" you might say "Drink fewer beverages that are high in sugar, like sodas, sweet tea, and juices."
- 2. Generate dialogue by asking the right questions:** How will your patients use the information and apply it to their own lives? Open-ended questions like, "You said you enjoy cooking, what are your favorite meals to make at home?" can be useful to assess knowledge levels and generate further conversation and learning opportunities. Or, ask practical questions like, "How often do you grocery shop each month?"
- 3. Make use of imagery—look, taste and smell:** Add show and tell teaching techniques. The beautiful colors, smells and texture of foods lends itself naturally to a multi-sensory teaching experience. Bring real food props into the classroom for discussion, an entire culinary demonstration isn't necessary. Opportunities to try new produce, or a sugar-free beverage can enhance the classroom or office experience. Food companies will often provide you with samples for your patients especially if it is a new product.
- 4. Use health analogies:** Incorporate nutrition health analogies to address various nutrition concepts. For example, carbohydrate counting can be described like a financial budget. If one stays on track with one's budget that can help better manage blood glucose levels but, just like overeating, if one spends money one doesn't have, it can result in blood glucose levels out of range.
- 5. Keep it concise:** CDEs care about their patients and often want to share as much information as possible in hopes to enhance their care but that may not be effective. Choose two key concepts to impart during each session. Regardless of whether it is a 15-minute consultation or a 45-minute class, always use the rule of two.