

Ways Faith Communities Can Promote Healthy Eating

Eating healthy is good for us. It lowers our risk of illnesses such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes, as well as defends against depression. Good eating habits also can boost our energy, sharpen our memory, and stabilize our mood.

It is no accident that almost every religious tradition features food as a central part of their sacred practices. Eating is a holy act, so it is important that we eat well and in ways that honor our bodies, God, and each other.



How can faith communities promote healthy eating?

Encourage congregants to eat well:

- Share healthy recipes, and resources, like USDA MyPlate print materials, graphics, videos and tools, and Eat Healthy on a Budget article,
- Host a healthy eating presentation or workshop,
- Ask your faith leader to incorporate a health message into a sermon.

Develop internal policies to guide healthier food choices at church events:

- Require fresh food options and unsweetened beverages during congregational functions. See Healthy Cooking for Your Congregation for ideas on how to select, prepare, and serve healthy meals,
- Serve nutritious snacks during children's programs.

Offer healthy food for the community:

- Bring nutritious meals to community dinners or food pantries,
- Establish a community garden and donate produce to area agencies,
- Set up a congregational farmer's market,
- Use kitchen facilities for healthy cooking demonstrations and classes.

Advocate in your community for healthier food options:

- Adopt a corner store to request and reinforce fresh food sales,
- Encourage local restaurants to include health information or more nutritious dishes on their menu.