## Abstract

Knowledge and education about sodium and heart health influences food choices. When selecting foods, it is important for cardiac rehabilitation participants to be aware of where the sodium in their diet comes from. Assessment of a local cardiac rehabilitation group at Sanford Family Wellness found that many participants still consumed high amounts of sodium in their diets. The purpose of this program was to inform participants about the effects of sodium on heart health and provide resources to help those desiring to make better low-sodium choices. The Transtheoretical Model of behavior change guided our program objectives. The program focused on enhancing participants’ knowledge in order to motivate and prepare them to make lower sodium food choices. Additionally, we discussed the benefits of diets that are lower in sodium, sodium and nutrition education were included, and we also introduced easy ways to reduce sodium intake without making drastic lifestyle changes. Program evaluation was completed by asking participants about their current sodium knowledge in relation to their health, followed by an educational session on sodium with a questionnaire to see whether they felt they learned anything new. All participants reported that they learned something new about sodium—the main takeaways were label reading and rinsing canned beans and vegetables. In summary, providing education to improve food selection skills can help motivate and prepare them to make lower sodium food choices.

### Context

- Cardiac rehabilitation participants revealed signs of increased sodium intake according to assessment survey.
- Population appropriately identified the lower sodium option when presented with a low sodium/high sodium comparison following the educational intervention.

### Research Purpose

The purpose of this intervention is to help cardiac rehabilitation participants evaluate their knowledge with regard to sodium and heart disease and explore their readiness to make lifestyle changes related to reducing sodium intake.

## Participants

- Members of the Cardiac Rehabilitation Group at Sanford Family Wellness

### Experimental Measure

- Pre-intervention participant survey
- Food Frequency Questionnaire
- Post-intervention survey

### Hypothesis: Cardiac Rehabilitation Patients have a high sodium intake.

- Lack of education
- Unwillingness to change eating habits
- Easy access to convenience foods

### Outcome Objectives

- Patients will be able to correctly identify 8 out of 10 low-sodium foods when paired with a high-sodium option within 15 minutes of the nutritional intervention. This would be an 80% accuracy rate.
- Client will check the box on the post-intervention survey that states their willingness to limit their restaurant dining in the future based on the information learned.

## Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Result</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original</td>
<td>Vs. Result</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Results

#### Figure 1

Outcome objectives and results of community intervention

- Participants gained knowledge on what sodium is and its implications on their health
- Participants expressed willingness to continue lowering their sodium intake
- Participants completed a Post-Intervention Survey
- Present samples of foods with different sodium levels for comparison
- Explained ways to help limit sodium intake
- Explained how to look for sodium on labels

#### Figure 2

Can you pick out which foods are lower in sodium?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. Canned peas</th>
<th>a. Frozen peas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Canned green beans</td>
<td>a. Frozen green beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Oscar Meyer turkey slices</td>
<td>b. Hormel’s turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Heart healthy chicken noodle soup</td>
<td>b. Oscar Meyer chicken noodle soup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Heart healthy marinara sauce</td>
<td>a. Organic marinara sauce</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Conclusions

- Cardiac Rehabilitation participants gained knowledge of ways to lower their sodium intake.
- Participants expressed willingness to continue lowering their sodium intake.
- Participants gained knowledge on what sodium is and its implications on their health.

### Implications

- Education on sodium and its implications can positively affect eating habits.
- Most cardiac rehabilitation patients already know about the effects on sodium level while eating out, but now know how to make better choices when they do eat out.
- Most cardiac rehabilitation patients are able to decipher the lower sodium option when given two examples.