



10 Day Real Food Challenge

Toolkit

Excellus  

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10 Day Real Food Challenge Toolkit

This toolkit contains templates for activities, assessment tools, and additional resources that can be adapted and incorporated into your employee wellness program.

Tips for using these resources:

Participation in wellness challenges should be voluntary for employees and available to all. Create a wellness committee to help communicate and implement your program. Have fun and be creative in offering challenges. Adapt them to your unique culture and make them your own!

Wellbeing Engagement Consultation:

A certified Wellbeing Engagement Consultant from Excellus BlueCross BlueShield is available to meet with you and offer:

- An overview of available wellness resources through the health plan
- An assessment of your current wellness program
- Recommendations for next steps

Contact your Excellus BCBS account representative or broker to schedule your consultation.

Important Information:

It is the employer's responsibility to ensure that incentives and prizes are in compliance with all ACA and IRS regulations. Consult with your legal counsel for guidance.



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How to Use the Toolkit

Each of the resources that are included inside of your toolkit were carefully chosen to provide the most benefit for your employees. Below gives you some tips and tricks on how to best use each of them.

Daily Motivational Messages

We have provided you with information, resources, and facts regarding the challenge topic that you can deliver electronically to your work force. Keeping your audience engaged during the course of the challenge is a good way to help encourage participating. Simply copy the text for the applicable week, paste it into an email, and distribute to everyone. Set yourself a daily reminder so that you don't forget to send it!

Flyers

Each of the daily tips have been turned into flyers that you can print out to post in common areas, distribute via the mail, or attach them to an email to send out digitally. Determine how you want to distribute the flyers; based on your distribution method(s) create a plan of how you plan to accomplish this goal.

Tracker

A tracker has been customized to meet each challenge's needs so that you can distribute them to whomever wishes to participate. We have designed the tracker to be used interactively if you share them electronically, or you can print them out to distribute them.

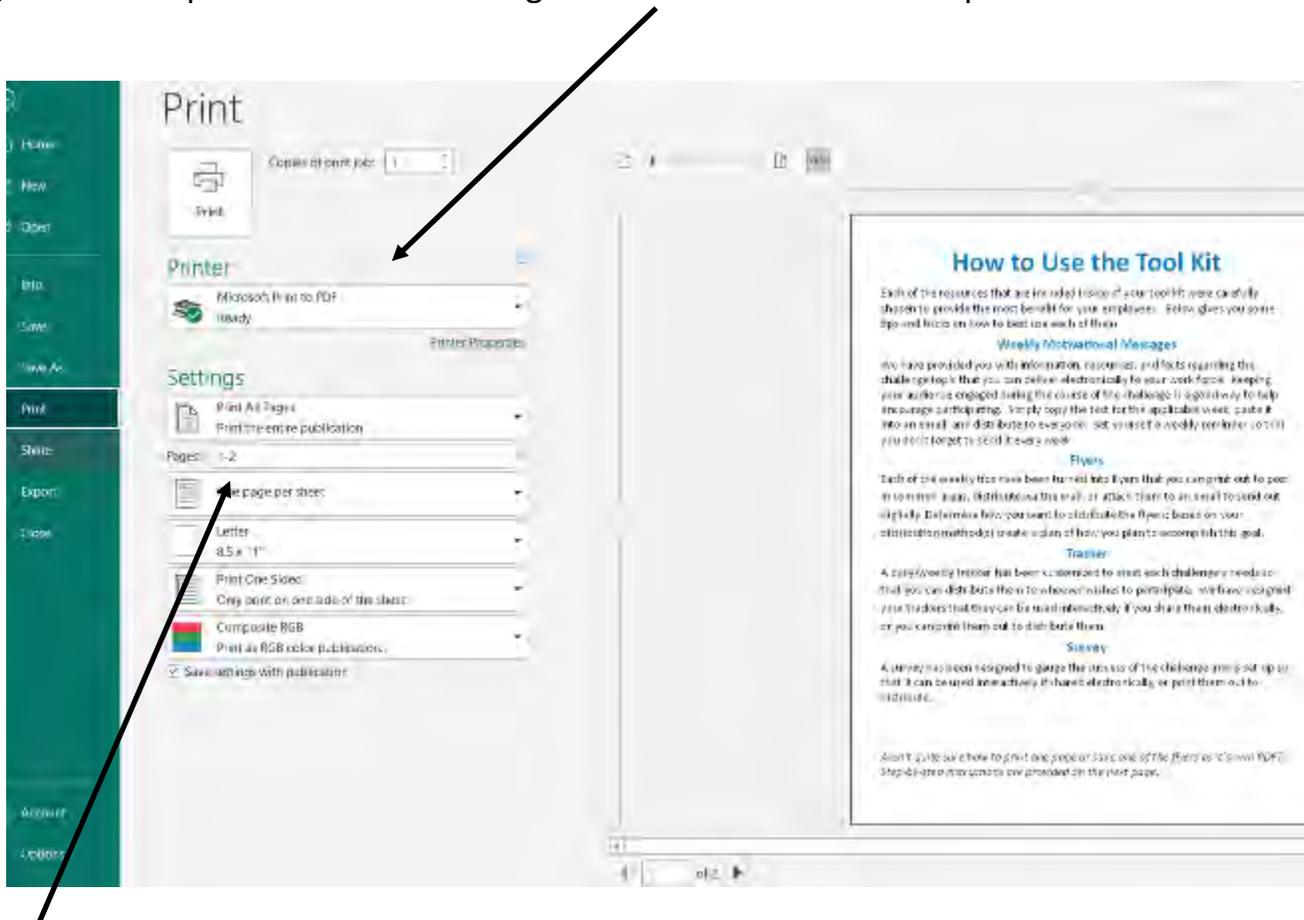
Survey

A survey has been designed to gauge the success of the challenge and is set up so that it can be used interactively if shared electronically, or print them out to distribute.

How to Extract a Page From a PDF

Step 1: Open your Challenge Toolkit PDF and go to the “Print” menu. Once there you can save single pages of the PDF to its own document.

Step 2: In the printer section of this screen, make sure that “PDF” is the option selected, if it is not, use the drop down arrow to the right of the box to select this option.



Step 3: Enter the page number(s) you are interested in saving as its own file.

Step 4: Select “Print” to generate a PDF containing only the page number(s) you selected; save the file and you’re ready to attach it to emails!

NOTE: If you want to print a single page instead of saving it, all you need to do is make sure that in Step 2 you have your printer selected instead of PDF.



Challenge Guidelines

The goal of the 10 Day Real Food Challenge is to motivate and encourage employees to incorporate simple changes that can lead to long term healthy lifestyles. It's not only what we eat that matters, but also how much and even where we eat it. Long term behavior change takes practice. This challenge is designed to introduce one new challenge each day, building on previous activities. At the end of 10 days, participants will have incorporated and practiced different eating habits and dietary strategies, which may lead to long term change.

Timeline

Determine when the challenge will begin and when it will end.

Things to do before the challenge

Focus on promotion & communication (posters, email blasts, etc). We have included a promotional flyer you can use along with email tips and suggestions! Make sure everyone who wants to participate has the needed documents to do so (tracker, flyer, etc).

Things to do during the challenge

Keep your employees engaged, regularly communicate tips, tricks, and resources for the challenge (we

have supplied some suggestions in this toolkit).

Things to do after the challenge

Recognize the challenge winner(s) and all who participated. Encourage your employees to complete the provided survey and share their success stories!

Prizes

Consider prizes not only for the end of the challenge but throughout as well to maintain engagement. Prizes can be anything from gift cards to company swag or acknowledgment on a newsletter or poster.

Additional Resources

- Weekly motivational messages
- Weekly communication flyers
- Post challenge survey questions
- Your Wellbeing Engagement Consultant

Daily Motivational Messages

Day One – Ditch the Fast Food

Go Fast Food Free: Skip the drive thru and avoid eating at fast food restaurants. Fast food contains high amounts of unwanted nutrients like salt, fat and artificial chemicals.

For healthy eating on the run, try these tips:

- Bring your lunch from home. Brown bagging it can save you money and gives you more control over what you are eating.
- Cook extra food on the weekend to make weekday meal preparation fast and easy.
- Create a “survival kit” of healthy foods to keep at work or in your car. Include things like fruit, nuts, yogurt, veggies and hummus, or cheese sticks. Don’t forget to include a water bottle.
- Keep a well-stocked pantry and freezer to help make meal planning and preparation easier. Include things like canned beans, whole grain rice and pasta, frozen or low sodium canned vegetables, frozen portions of fish, chicken or lean beef

Day Two – Nature’s Fast Food

Nature’s Fast Food: Eat five servings of fruits and vegetables per day. Incorporate at least one fruit or vegetable with your breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Don’t make vegetables an afterthought.

Try to plan your meals to include a couple of different vegetables and increase your serving size of them. Add cucumbers, fresh spinach leaves or sprouts to your sandwich along with lettuce or tomato. Make soup and add extra vegetables to it. Stir-fried chicken can also include lots of vegetables including mushrooms, peppers, baby corn, cauliflower, carrots and celery.

Tips to increase fruit intake:

- Add fruit to hot or cold cereal
- Add to a tossed salad (i.e. pear, apple)
- Make a smoothie with fat free/soy milk and fresh/frozen fruit

- Add a piece of fruit to your lunch or snack
- Keep fruit visible
- Take some time and cut up fruit now to refrigerate and enjoy later
- Still have that bedtime craving? Add strawberries or peaches to your ice cream or a small amount of peanut butter to go along with your apple slices.

Day Three – The Better Beverage

The Better Beverage Challenge: Limit your beverages to water, coffee, tea, herbal tea, and other unsweetened, zero-calorie drinks.

- Drinking Water Helps Maintain the Balance of Body Fluids. Your body is composed of about 60% water. The functions of these bodily fluids include digestion, absorption, circulation, creation of saliva, transportation of nutrients, and maintenance of body temperature.
- Water Can Help Control Calories. For years, dieters have been drinking lots of water as a weight loss strategy. While water doesn’t have any magical effect on weight loss, substituting it for higher calorie beverages can certainly help.
- Water Helps Energize Muscles. Cells that don’t maintain their balance of fluids and electrolytes shrivel, which can result in muscle fatigue.
- Water Helps Keep Skin Looking Good. Your skin contains plenty of water, and functions as a protective barrier to prevent excess fluid loss
- Water Helps Your Kidneys. Body fluids transport waste products in and out of cells. The main toxin in the body is blood urea nitrogen, a water-soluble waste that is able to pass through the kidneys to be excreted in the urine.
- Water Helps Maintain Normal Bowel Function. Adequate hydration keeps things flowing along your gastrointestinal tract and prevents constipation

Daily Motivational Messages

Day Four – Expand Your Palate

Expand Your Palate: Try two new whole foods. Whole foods are foods that can be picked out of a garden, field, or off trees. These foods are unprocessed (or very minimally processed) and in their most natural state.

Examples: avocados, sweet potatoes, beans and nuts.

- Explore ethnic food. Many cultures offer a plant based cuisine prepared with interesting herbs or spices.
- Look through old family recipes. Chances are your grandmother had a great casserole recipe using food from the garden.
- Visit a farmers market or the produce section in the grocery store. Ask how to prepare a fruit or vegetable you've never tried before

Day Five – Go Whole

Go Whole: Eat 100% Whole Grain for two meals per day. Consume only 100% whole grains when eating bread, pasta, and any other products with grains. Look for the word "whole" in the ingredient list.

A grain is considered "whole" if it has the bran, the germ and the endosperm intact. Refined grains have been modified and are missing some of those components as well as valuable nutrients. White flour, rice and pasta are examples of refined grains. Refined grains may be "enriched" with vitamins, however consuming food in its natural state assures that you get the full nutritional impact. Whole grain foods are high in natural fiber.

- For Breakfast, try whole grain cereal, steel cut oats or whole wheat English Muffins
- Add some quinoa or faro to a salad for lunch, or include barley in home made soup.
- Substitute whole grain brown rice for white rice with dinner.

- Bonus! Popcorn is a great source of whole grain. Enjoy some as an evening snack. (Source: wholegrainscouncil.org)

Day Six – Eating Mindfully

Eating Mindfully: Eat one meal per day with no distractions. Learning to prepare new foods, making different meal choices, and experiencing new flavors requires that you think about what you are buying and cooking. Why not spend some time focusing on the experience of eating your food as well. As you eat, pay attention to the taste and texture of each bite.

Mindful eating leads to better eating habits and allows you to use all your senses to explore, savor and taste what you eat.

- Turn off the TV and your phone
- Don't eat in your car or at your desk.
- Create some atmosphere with flowers, lighting or nice linens

Day Seven – Small Plate Movement

Portion size matters! Many of us eat more than we think because we tend to eat what is on our plate. Use no more than a 9" plate for your largest meal of the day. Smaller plates mean smaller portions.

Other easy environmental tips:

- Plate food at the counter and put the rest of the food away before dining.
- Store cut up veggies or fruit in clear containers easily visible in the refrigerator.
- Hide less healthy choices on high shelves in the back of cupboards.
- Don't eat from the container. Pre-portion serving sizes of your favorite snacks. Nuts and popcorn are nutritious choices!

Daily Motivational Messages

Day Eight – Read Labels

All packaged foods have a “Nutrition Facts” label. The labels provide valuable information about the quality of the food. Start by reading the ingredients list - fewer ingredients usually indicate a less processed food.

Look at the serving size and calories per serving to make sure you aren’t eating too much. Fat, sodium and sugar are also useful numbers - try to minimize these.

Learn more at: <https://www.eatright.org/food/nutrition/nutrition-facts-and-food-labels/the-basics-of-the-nutrition-facts-label>

Day Nine – Be Social

Dining with family or friends offer benefits that go beyond the table. Having someone to share not only a meal with, but also conversation, is a great way to spend your time, so give it a try!

Learn more at: <https://thefamilydinnerproject.org/about-us/benefits-of-family-dinners/>

Day Ten – Go Meatless

Try being a vegetarian for a day. Vegetarians eat no meat, poultry or fish, but they can eat eggs and dairy. Vegans do not eat or use any animal products.

<http://www.vrg.org/nutshell/nutshell.htm>

Day Eleven – You Did It!

Congratulations on making it through the 10 Day Real Food Challenge! We hope you had some fun while learning about healthy food alternatives and ways to properly nourish your body!

Here are some additional resources for you:

- In Defense of Food by Michael Pollan
<http://michaelpollan.com/books/in-defense-of-food/>
- The End of Mindless Eating by Brian Wansink

Announcing the Winner(s)

Thank you to everyone who participated in the challenge– we hope that you had fun!

The prize winner(s) of this challenge are:_____.





Join us for the 10 Day Real Food Challenge where we will motivate and encourage you to incorporate simple changes that can lead to long term healthy lifestyles. It's not only what we eat that matters, but also how much and even where we eat it. Long term behavior change takes practice. This challenge is designed to introduce one new challenge each day, building on previous activities. At the end of 10 days, you will have incorporated and practiced different eating habits and dietary strategies, which may lead to long term change.

This challenge begins starting _____ and ending _____

You will be provided with daily challenges and a tracker to help you in your quest for success!

How to Win

At the end of the challenge, please turn in a completed tracker with your name and contact number to _____ to be entered in to win!

If you have any questions along the way, please reach out to _____



Day 1 Challenge: Ditch the Fast Food!

Skip the drive thru and avoid eating at fast food restaurants. Fast food contains high amounts of unwanted nutrients like salt, fat and artificial chemicals.

For healthy eating on the run, try these tips:

- Bring your lunch from home. Brown bagging it can save you money and gives you more control over what you are eating.
- Cook extra food on the weekend to make weekday meal preparation fast and easy.
- Create a “survival kit” of healthy foods to keep at work or in your car. Include things like fruit, nuts, yogurt, veggies and hummus, or cheese sticks. Don’t forget to include a water bottle.
- Keep a well-stocked pantry and freezer to help make meal planning and preparation easier. Include things like canned beans, whole grain rice and pasta, frozen or low sodium canned vegetables, frozen portions of fish, chicken or lean beef



Day 2 Challenge: Nature's Fast Food

Nature's Fast Food: Eat five servings of fruits and vegetables per day. Incorporate at least one fruit or vegetable with your breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Don't make vegetables an afterthought.

Try to plan your meals to include a couple of different vegetables and increase your serving size of them. Add cucumbers, fresh spinach leaves or sprouts to your sandwich along with lettuce or tomato. Make soup and add extra vegetables to it. Stir-fried chicken can also include lots of vegetables including mushrooms, peppers, baby corn, cauliflower, carrots and celery.

Tips to increase fruit intake:

- Add fruit to hot or cold cereal
- Add to a tossed salad (i.e. pear, apple)
- Make a smoothie with fat free/soy milk and fresh/frozen fruit
- Add a piece of fruit to your lunch or snack
- Keep fruit visible
- Take some time and cut up fruit now to refrigerate and enjoy later

Still have that bedtime craving? Add strawberries or peaches to your ice cream or a small amount of peanut butter



Day 3 Challenge: The Better Beverage

Limit your beverages to water, coffee, tea, herbal tea, and other unsweetened, zero-calorie drinks.

- **Drinking Water Helps Maintain the Balance of Body Fluids.** Your body is composed of about 60% water. The functions of these bodily fluids include digestion, absorption, circulation, creation of saliva, transportation of nutrients, and maintenance of body temperature.
- **Water Can Help Control Calories.** For years, dieters have been drinking lots of water as a weight loss strategy. While water doesn't have any magical effect on weight loss, substituting it for higher calorie beverages can certainly help.
- **Water Helps Energize Muscles.** Cells that don't maintain their balance of fluids and electrolytes shrivel, which can result in muscle fatigue.
- **Water Helps Keep Skin Looking Good.** Your skin contains plenty of water, and functions as a protective barrier to prevent excess fluid loss
- **Water Helps Your Kidneys.** Body fluids transport waste products in and out of cells. The main toxin in the body is blood urea nitrogen, a water-soluble waste that is able to pass through the kidneys to be excreted in the urine.
- **Water Helps Maintain Normal Bowel Function.** Adequate hydration keeps things flowing along your gastrointestinal tract and prevents constipation



Day 4 Challenge: Expand Your Palate

Try two new whole foods. Whole foods are foods that can be picked out of a garden, field, or off trees. These foods are unprocessed (or very minimally processed) and in their most natural state.

Examples: avocados, sweet potatoes, beans and nuts.

- Explore ethnic food. Many cultures offer a plant based cuisine prepared with interesting herbs or spices.
- Look through old family recipes. Chances are your grandmother had a great casserole recipe using food from the garden.
- Visit a farmers market or the produce section in the grocery store. Ask how to prepare a fruit or vegetable you've never tried before



Day 5 Challenge: Go Whole

Eat 100% Whole Grain for two meals per day. Consume only 100% whole grains when eating bread, pasta, and any other products with grains. Look for the word “whole” in the ingredient list.

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- Add some quinoa or faro to a salad for lunch, or include barley in home made soup
- Substitute whole grain brown rice for white rice with dinner.
- Bonus! Popcorn is a great source of whole grain. Enjoy some as an evening snack

(Source: wholegrainscouncil.org)



Day 6 Challenge: Eating Mindfully

Eat one meal per day with no distractions. Learning to prepare new foods, making different meal choices, and experiencing new flavors requires that you think about what you are buying and cooking. Why not spend some time focusing on the experience of eating your food as well. As you eat, pay attention to the taste and texture of each bite.

Mindful eating leads to better eating habits and allows you to use all your senses to explore, savor and taste what you eat.

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- Don't eat in your car or at your desk.
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Day 7 Challenge: The Small Plate

Movement

Portion size matters! Many of us eat more than we think because we tend to eat what is on our plate. Use no more than a 9" plate for your largest meal of the day. Smaller plates mean smaller portions.

Other easy environmental tips:

- Plate food at the counter and put the rest of the food away before dining.
- Store cut up veggies or fruit in clear containers easily visible in the refrigerator.
- Hide less healthy choices on high shelves in the back of cupboards.
- Don't eat from the container. Pre-portion serving sizes of your favorite snacks. Nuts and popcorn are nutritious choices!



Day 8 Challenge: Read the Label

All packaged foods have a “Nutrition Facts” label. The labels provide valuable information about the quality of the food. Start by reading the ingredients list - fewer ingredients usually indicate a less processed food.

Look at the serving size and calories per serving to make sure you aren’t eating too much. Fat, sodium and sugar are also useful numbers - try to minimize these.

Learn more at: <https://www.eatright.org/food/nutrition/nutrition-facts-and-food-labels/the-basics-of-the-nutrition-facts-label>



Day 9 Challenge: Be Social!

Dining with family or friends offers benefits that go beyond the table. Having someone to share not only a meal with, but also conversation, is a great way to spend your time, so give it a try!

Learn more at: <https://thefamilydinnerproject.org/about-us/benefits-of-family-dinners/>



Day 10 Challenge: Go Meatless

Try being a vegetarian for a day. Vegetarians eat no meat, poultry or fish, but they can eat eggs and dairy. Vegans do not eat or use any animal products.

<http://www.vrg.org/nutshell/nutshell.htm>



You Made It!

Congratulations on making it through the 10 Day Real Food Challenge! We hope you had some fun while learning about healthy food alternatives and ways to properly nourish your body!

Here are some additional resources for you:

- In Defense of Food by Michael Pollan <http://michaelpollan.com/books/in-defense-of-food/>
- The End of Mindless Eating by Brian Wansink

Post-Challenge Questions

1. As a result of the program, which of the following did you do? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Stopped eating fast food | Increase water intake and reduce sugary beverages |
| Read food labels before purchasing | Tried some new whole foods |
| Cooked more meals at home | Other |
| Decrease portion size | |

2. Were you successful in completing all 10 challenges? Y/N

3. If the 10 Day Real Food Challenge was offered again, would you participate? Y/N

If no, why not?

4. If offered during the next 10 Day Real Food program, which of the following events would you most likely participate in? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| Group activities | Journaling |
| Cooking demos | Other |
| Onsite educational programs | |

5. What would influence your decision to participate again? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Desire to manage weight | Variety of interactive events |
| Desire to improve my health | Prizes |
| Interest in program | Other |
| Having a team motivate me | |
| Being able to participate in events | |

6. What did you like MOST about the 10 Day Real Food challenge?

7. What did you like LEAST about the 10 Day Real Food challenge?

8. If you have an inspiring story to share about how you adopted a new healthy habit or overcame a barrier to work towards your goal, we want to hear from you! Your story can motivate and inspire your coworkers to make healthy changes too! If you are willing to share a brief testimonial please write your name here and we will reach out to you.

Thank you for completing the survey. Your responses are extremely helpful in planning future programs.