At A Glance

- Soup is a favorite food for many elderly and provides essential nutrients and fluid.
- It is easy to prepare and can be frozen in individual serving sizes for easy-to-fix meals in the future.
- With added protein and/or a sandwich with protein and a glass of milk, a soup meal can provide all the food groups.

Time Required

- 35 to 45 minutes

Core Messages

- Soup provides essential nutrients and fluids to help the elderly meet nutritional needs and prevent or control chronic diseases associated with getting older.
- Soup can meet nutritional needs that have been shown to slow the rate of some physiological changes that occur with aging.
- Soup is easy to prepare, can be prepared ahead of time, and does not need to come from a can.

Objectives

As the result of participating in this learning session, learners will

- Describe ingredients used for preparing healthy soups.
- Prepare a variety of soups from Create a Soup!
- Store soup safely and freeze for later meals.

Outcomes

- Eat more vegetables.
- Eat more whole grains.
- Select foods and beverages that promote healthy weight.

Materials Needed

- 8½ x 11-inch cardstock or paper
- Color markers
- Handout: Create A Soup!¹
- Handout: Flavorful Soups/Tips for Freezing Soup¹
- Handout: Recipe for soup of your choice (a recipe using the Create A Soup concept)¹
- Ingredients for soup (recipe of your choice)
- Utensils
- Bowls and spoons for tasting
- Optional: Refrigerator/freezer thermometer (1 for each participant)

Getting Ready

- Study the lesson plan
- Write answers to Tennessee Food Trivia on cards or sheets of paper.
- Make copies of handouts.
- Gather the ingredients and utensils needed for the demonstration.
- Print a copy of the recipe for each participant.

¹ Available from the Senior Living Website
**FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

As one ages, many physiological changes occur. Many of these changes have an impact on the nutritional status of the elderly. Hardy soups that contain a variety of food ingredients, especially vegetables and protein can help prevent or delay many of the health conditions associated with getting older.

*Appetite and thirst changes:* the ability to regulate appetite may be diminished in the elderly leading to overweight or weight loss. Elderly individuals don’t seem to notice thirst as quickly and may become dehydrated more easily than younger people. Soup provides calories and fluids. Depending on the type of soup, it may not be as calorically dense as high-fat and foods with added sugar, which may prevent unhealthy weight gain.

*Decreased immune response:* the vitamins, minerals, protein, other nutrients and phytochemicals in soup can help the system’s immune system respond to infections.

*Sensory changes:* the senses of smell and taste are often diminished. One way individuals compensate for loss of smell and taste is by consuming foods that are high in salt. However, the blood pressure of older individuals tends to be more responsive to the blood pressure-raising effects of sodium compared to younger people. Making soup using healthy ingredients rather than eating processed soup can reduce sodium intake. Adding the right flavors through use of herbs and spices and using healthy ingredients can make soup healthy and appealing to older people.

*Loss of teeth:* people with poor fitting dentures can usually eat soup which requires less chewing than most meals.

*Digestive tract changes:* A hardy soup is usually easy to digest and if it contains a lot of vegetables, it will provide many of the nutrients of concern for older people.

Obesity is a problem for many of the elderly but if someone is too thin and it appears they may not be getting enough calories, suggest sandwiches and other side items to include providing more calories.

**Below are examples of general talking points for the senior audience (you also will need to develop talking points specific to the recipe you choose to demonstrate):**

As one enjoys a steaming bowl of homemade soup on a cold rainy day, they may not think about the benefits it provides. A bowl of warm broth not only warms the body, but also the soul. Soup has a universal appeal because of its convenience, low cost, and variety. Soup not only can prevent disease, but it also adds much needed nutrition to the general diet. Soup is generally low in fat.

*Healthy and Prevents Disease:* Eating soup is a great way to add healthy vegetables to meals. Adding chopped spinach or kale at the end of cooking boosts a soup’s vitamin, mineral and antioxidant content which helps ward off winter colds. With wise choices soup can also help lower the risks of cancer and heart disease. When someone creates their own soup, they are in the driver’s seat and can steer clear of unhealthy artificial ingredients that most people can’t even pronounce.
**Controls Hunger:** The protein in hearty soups helps satisfy hunger, and the nutrient rich liquid is digested rapidly and signals to the brain that one is full. A recent Penn. State university study states that, “incorporating low-energy-dense foods like soup, vegetables and fruits into the diet is a key to calorie reduction and therefore successful long term weight loss”. The emphasis of the study was to encourage people to eat more of certain good foods, such as soup, to help them control their fat and calorie intake. The study showed that a larger volume of food consumed helped promote satiety.

**Economical and Convenient:** Canned soups may seem easier to prepare, but are more expensive. One ends up paying for gaily-printed labels, advertising, storing and shipping. Homemade soup may include leftovers, maybe the chicken bones from a Sunday meal. In fact, one can add just about anything to soup. Making a large batch of your favorite soup not only fills the home with a wonderful aroma, but also lowers food costs. Soup can be frozen for use at a later date. This saves time and energy in preparing meals at a later date.

**Versatile:** A light soup served as a first course sets up one’s palate for the courses that follow. Soup can become a main meal by adding extra carbohydrates and protein. Soup can be thickened in a variety of ways: one day with elbow macaroni, the next day diced potatoes, then rice, barley or even stale bread. Just remember: for a meal in a bowl, just include a small amount of protein. For protein sources other than meat, substitute tofu (a soybean "curd") or a can of beans.

Soup is inexpensive, nourishing and invigorating. It can be simple or elaborate. Unlike what happens during stewing and frying, vegetables, mushrooms, meat and poultry cooked directly in soups conserve much more of their natural nutrients, vitamins and general essence. And despite the fact that soups usually contain a lot less calories than the main dish, they aren’t any less nutritious or filling.

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**TEACHING THE LESSON**

**Welcome**

**Tennessee Food Trivia**

Play **Tennessee Food Trivia** as a warm-up for this learning session.

Before the session begins, write the following words on individual cards or sheets of paper using large, bold letters:

- Cornbread
- Ramps
- Tomato
- Goo Goo
- Coca-Cola
- JFG Coffee
- Green beans
- Beans
- Flour and corn meal
- Pork

This activity works best when learners are sitting in small groups at tables. If tables are not available, ask learners to turn toward each other to form small groups. Ask everyone to introduce themselves in their small groups. Place the answer cards or sheets of paper in the center of the tables before the session begins (or distribute answer cards to each group). If there are fewer than groups than cards, give groups more than one
question. Add more questions related to your county or region of the state as needed. Read each of the following questions to the group and ask the group with the correct answer to call it out loud.

**What food did Elvis Presley crumble into buttermilk so that it could be eaten with a spoon?**

Answer: Cornbread

**What is an "unusual" food eaten in Tennessee?**

Answer: Ramps

*(Ramps, also called "Tennessee Truffles" are a favorite food in Southern Appalachia and add flavor to soups, egg dishes, casseroles, rice dishes and potato dishes. Traditionally, they are scrambled with eggs or fried with potatoes.)*

**What is Tennessee's state fruit?**

Answer: Tomato

**What nationally-known candy made in Tennessee consists of chocolate, caramel, peanuts, and marshmallow and is named for the pleasing sound made by a small child?**

Answer: Goo Goo

**Two Chattanooga men, B. F. Thomas and J. B. Whitehead, obtained the world's first "franchised bottling" of what drink?**

Answer: Coca-Cola

**This company that originated in Morristown, Tennessee, said in its slogan that it was "the best part of the meal."**

Answer: JFG coffee

**This food is referred to as "leather britches" when dried.**

Answer: Green beans

**This food was canned by A. J. Bush and his wife Sarah in the small community of Chestnut Hill, Tennessee. (Tomatoes and green beans may also be a correct answer, but Bush Brothers is famous for beans.)**

Answer: Beans
"Goodness Gracious, its Good!" was the slogan synonymous with these food products featured on radio programs and the Grand Ole Opry.

Answer: Flour and corn meal

This food is featured in an annual world famous competition held in Memphis, Tennessee, in May.

Answer: Pork

Anchor

POINT OUT: Soup is a great food! You can make it ahead of time using foods you might have on hand. You can use different combinations of ingredients so that you can enjoy a variety of flavors and foods. You can freeze soup in individual portions so that if you want enough for just one or two people, you can heat up just what you need. Sometimes you just don’t feel like cooking and making food in larger batches when you do feel like cooking saves you time and money.

Distribute the handout Create a Soup! Describe ways to create a tasty soup from simple foods as your audience follows along.

Distribute the handout Flavorful Soup/Tips for Freezing Soup. Discuss ways to make soup flavorful using spices and herbs rather than salt and ingredients with salt.

Let's Create a Soup!

ASK: What makes us want to eat a certain food? (Pause and allow anyone who wants to volunteer to answer your question.)

It is usually of number of things including:

≈ Our experience with the food from our past like some of the foods in our trivia game.
≈ How the food looks.
≈ How the food smells.
≈ How it tastes.
≈ How much it costs.

All of us have our favorite foods. Ask for any volunteers to call out their favorite foods. If no one calls out a soup, ask "who enjoys eating soup?"

Apply

Let’s Make Soup!

Distribute a copy of the soup you have decided to demonstrate. Demonstrate how to make the soup using talking points that refer to nutritional quality, managing food resources (including suggestions for other foods to make a meal) and food safety.
Recipes will be available from the Senior Living SharePoint website. Provide samples for learners to taste.

Refer learners to the other side of their handout **Flavorful Soup/Tips for Freezing Soup**. Describe how to freeze soup using the proper containers, filled appropriately leaving adequate headspace for expansion, and labeled with name of food and date. Remind learners to keep their refrigerators at 40°F or below and their freezers at 0°F or below. (Optional: Distribute refrigerator/freezer thermometers, if they are available.)

**Away**

**Will There Be Soup in Your Kitchen?**

Ask learners to find a partner and talk about some combinations of ingredients they think they will try at home. Give them about 3 minutes and ask for a couple of volunteers to share their ideas with the group.

Be sure to encourage them to use:

- Lower sodium ingredients rather than regular canned broths, stock, bouillon and other high-sodium ingredients.
- Fresh or canned meat lower in sodium.
- Lean meats (or substitute beans for meat).
- Whole grain pastas and brown rice.

**POINT OUT:** Soup can healthy food, a food that you can make ahead of time and a food you can eat alone or with family or friends. And, it does not have to come from a can!

Ask learners to come and talk about what they made at the next meeting.