



# Module 5: Track Your Food

## Lifestyle Coach Guide



# Module Overview

Tracking, or self-monitoring, has many benefits and can help participants pay attention to what they eat. This module provides different ways to help them portion and track food.

## Participant Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- Identify the benefits of tracking food
- Explain how to track the food they eat and the calories they take in
- Explain different ways to track food
- Explain how to figure out portion size and calories from food labels

## Things to Do

In addition to the Session Checklist, you will also want to do the following:

Before this session:

- Communicate with your participants via email, text message, app, or social media to continue the conversation on tracking. Here are some examples of messages to post:
  - 1 Week Prior: “During our next session, we’ll practice measuring and tracking the food we eat. This session will be very ‘hands-on.’”
  - 1 to 2 Days Prior: “It’s almost time for our food measuring and tracking session. Also, we’ll be talking about food labels. You can bring a dried good or a food with a nutrition label to explore with the group, if you’d like. Please make sure it does not need to be refrigerated.”
- Prepare for your measuring demonstration, making sure you can demonstrate the use of measuring cups and spoons and a kitchen scale in person or while sharing your video. Use easily measured dry goods, like cereal or rice, or liquids, like salad dressing. Shelf stable items will be easier for you to keep on hand. If time allows, you can have participants practice measuring, so collect and bring multiples if you are able.

## During this session:

- ❑ Remind participants to prepare measuring tools for the “How to Measure Your Food” activity.

## After this session:

- ❑ Communicate with your participants via email, text message, app, or social media to continue the conversation on how tracking food can help prevent type 2 diabetes. Here are some examples of messages to post:
  - “Since our last session, what challenges have you run into when tracking your food? Did you find anything surprising? Please share your thoughts with the group.”
  - “If you haven’t tried it yet, try to track one meal, like dinner, for one whole week. Share what you learn in the comments.”
  - “We have been tracking meals for a couple of weeks now. What have you learned about your habits? How are you creating new habits to continue your progress?”
  - “I am wondering how the FDA’s nutrition label infographic on page 11 of your Participant Guide has helped you. Share your thoughts” (optional: link to online version: [www.fda.gov/media/89314/download](http://www.fda.gov/media/89314/download)).
- ❑ Remind participants to view the “Track Your Food” Personal Success Tool module. [www.cdc.gov/diabetes/programs/preventt2/quiz.html?week=5](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/programs/preventt2/quiz.html?week=5)

# Session Content

The following content is designed to last for 60 minutes. Please allow about 10 extra minutes to receive weigh-in information and to consult with participants privately, if needed, at the start of each session.

Welcome and Review	Page 4	3 Min
Session Focus	Page 5	2 Min
Benefits of Food Tracking	Page 6	15 Min
How To Measure Your Food	Page 8	15 Min
How To Track Your Food	Page 12	15 Min
Making Sense of Food Labels	Page 16	5 Min
Plan for Success	Page 18	2 Min
Summary and Closing	Page 20	3 Min

# Welcome and Review



Time Estimate: 3 minutes  
Method: Facilitated Discussion

## **SAY:**

Welcome back, everyone! This is the [current session number] meeting of [name of program]. Today, we are going to talk about tracking your food to prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. Before we start, let's spend a few minutes reviewing what we discussed last time. I will try to answer any questions you may have.

## **DO:**

Briefly summarize the previous session.

## **DISCUSS:**

What questions do you have for me about what we talked about last time?

## **SAY:**

Let's talk about how things went with the action plan you made last time.

## **DISCUSS:**

What went well? What didn't go well?

## **SAY:**

Now let's talk about how it went with the other things you tried at home.

## **DISCUSS:**

What went well? What didn't go well?



Time Estimate: 2 minutes  
Method: Presentation

## **SAY:**

Please look at “Session Focus” on page 1 in the Participant Guide.



For a virtual session, use the screen share feature to display “Session Focus” from the Participant Guide for all participants to view.

## **SAY:**

Tracking what you eat has many benefits and can reveal habits and choices that you might want to change. These changes can help you prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. Today, we will talk about:

- The benefits of tracking food
- How to track the food you eat and the calories you take in
- Different ways to track your food
- How to figure out portion size and calories from food labels

You’ll also learn different ways to track your food and try them out so you can find one that works for you. Finally, you will make a new action plan.



Time Estimate: 15 minutes  
Methods: Presentation, Facilitated Discussion

This part of the session shows participants the benefits of tracking what they eat and explains various ways of tracking. Begin by sharing a brief story to introduce food tracking. Then lead a discussion on its benefits.

## Sally's Story (10 minutes)

### **SAY:**

We'll start with what food tracking is and some of the benefits you might get from tracking. Please look at "Sally's Story" on page 2 in the Participant Guide.



For a virtual session, use the screen share feature to display "Sally's Story" from the Participant Guide for all participants to view.

### **DO:**

Read (or have a volunteer read) the first paragraph of the story. Then discuss how she might try to change her eating habits.

### **ASK:**

What are some of the positive changes Sally has chosen to make?

## ANSWER:

Share the following (if not mentioned by participants):

- Eating healthy foods
- Paying attention to how much she eats
- Having a goal for losing weight
- Working with a supportive friend to track what she eats
- Trying new strategies to reach her goals

## DO:

Display the food log Sally and her friend created. Walk participants through the meals Sally recorded in her food log, comparing meals for each day side by side.

## ASK:

What differences do you see between the two days?

## ANSWER:

- There are differences between what she estimated and what she measured.
- When she measured, she paid more attention to the food she was eating.
- There was a large difference between the calories she thought she was eating and those in what she measured.
- Sally didn't track any of her drinks the first day. That's a significant number of calories.



For a virtual session, use an online whiteboard or Word document to record and display differences mentioned by participants aloud or through chat.

## SAY:

Here we see that Sally is eating more calories than she thought, which is making it harder for her to reach her weight loss goal. There are other benefits to tracking, too.

## Benefits of Food Tracking (5 minutes)

### **SAY:**

Please look at the “Food Tracking Benefits” list on page 5 in the Participant Guide.



For a virtual session, use the screen share feature to display the “Food Tracking Benefits” list from the Participant Guide for all participants to view.

### **DO:**

Review one or two benefits and answer any questions from participants.

### **DISCUSS:**

Does anyone have any other benefits you want to share with the group?

Are there any benefits you are really excited about? If so, why?

### **DO:**

Allow participants to share briefly prior to moving to the next activity.



Time Estimate: 15 minutes  
Methods: Facilitated Discussion,  
Demonstration, Activity

In this part of the session, participants will review various ways to measure the food they are eating, which will lead into methods for tracking in the next section.

## Measuring Tools Demonstration (8 minutes)

### SAY:

We've talked about the benefits of tracking your food each day. Now, we'll talk about how you can easily get started tracking. Let's begin by reviewing some options for figuring out the amount of foods you eat.

The amount you eat, and the calories that go with it, are very important. How do you know the amount of cream cheese you spread on toast or cereal you pour into a bowl? It is very easy to overserve yourself if you don't have some ways to measure. Since our plates, bowls, and drinking glasses vary in size, it can be hard to guess cups, tablespoons, or ounces just by looking at them.

The same tools you use to measure ingredients for baking or cooking can help.

### DO:

Consider showing a size comparison between a vintage dinner plate and one of a contemporary size before continuing the demonstration. This allows participants to consider how plates have gotten a lot larger over the past 25 years.

Next, show participants the liquid measuring cups, measuring spoons, and a kitchen scale. You may want to get a sense for how familiar the participants are with each tool. Tell participants what each tool is called, if needed.



If not presenting in person, consider sharing a video of your demonstration, either live or recorded.

## **SAY:**

Here are some tools you can use to find out how much you eat. I'll show you a common serving size in tablespoons. One serving of cereal is often 1 cup. Let's measure that out.

## **DO:**

Scoop out 1 cup of cereal into a bowl and show participants the result. Point out that the Nutrition Facts label provides the suggested serving size. Next, demonstrate how to use a kitchen scale, including using the tare function to remove the weight of the container holding the food you are measuring.

Encourage participants to follow along, measuring out one serving based on the listed serving size of a food they commonly eat.



Sharing a live video demonstration can be effective in demonstrating the use of the kitchen scale and tare function.

## **Risks of Overestimating (2 minutes)**

## **DISCUSS:**

What did you notice about the suggested serving size compared to what you would normally eat?

## **DO:**

Facilitate a discussion with participants about the ease and risk of overestimating serving sizes when you don't measure.

## **SAY:**

Using these tools is the most exact way to measure. But you may not always have time or the tools to measure your food. So, it's good to learn how to eyeball serving size too.

## Hands and Serving Size (5 minutes)

### **SAY:**

Please look at the “Hands and Serving Size” images on page 6 in your Participant Guide.



For a virtual session, use the screen share feature to display “Hands and Serving Size” from the Participant Guide for all participants to view.

### **DO:**

If you'd like, you can also visually or physically show the objects demonstrated on the page. Help participants practice using their hands to measure one serving.



For a virtual session, consider sharing a live video or images of yourself demonstrating estimation methods with specific amounts of food items.

### **SAY:**

Using your hand to estimate, pour 1 cup of a dry food, like rice, into a container. Next, use a 1 cup measuring cup to check your estimate.

### **ASK:**

How did you all do? Who would like to share how close you estimated?



Consider having participants take a photo of their estimates. Ask them to share with the group by posting it to your online group or web conferencing tool.

### **DO:**

Finish up the demonstration by allowing a brief time for questions.



Time Estimate: 15 minutes  
Methods: Presentation, Facilitated Discussion

In this part of the session, participants will review the Food Tracking Activity and the Weekly Food Log handouts provided in the Participant Guide and discuss various strategies for tracking food.

## Track With Purpose and Quality (5 minutes)



For a virtual session, consider sharing your screen as you review the Food Tracking Activity and the Weekly Food Log handouts.

### **SAY:**

Let's all look at the Food Tracking Activity and the Weekly Food Log and how they can be used to track the food you eat.

### **DO:**

Display the Food Tracking Activity and the Weekly Food Log or ask participants to view their individual copies. Review the handouts briefly, explaining each component as needed: Day, Time, Item, Amount, and Calories.

Ask for a volunteer to share what they ate (Item), and when they ate it (Time). Explain how to write these facts on the handouts.

Answer any questions. Note that tracking calories will be covered in a later session.

## **SAY:**

There are many options for tracking the food you eat. You can track every meal, every day using the Weekly Food Log, but that can be an overwhelming way to start. Instead, take small steps and focus on two things using the Food Tracking Activity:

1. **Tracking your food with a purpose**
2. **The quality of your tracking versus tracking every day**

One complete and honest day of tracking from morning to night can provide more valuable insights than an entire week of incomplete and random tracking. Tracking is meant to help YOU by giving you an accurate account of your meals, snacks, and drinks. Also, putting your best effort into tracking one full day and reflecting on it is much easier. Remember: small steps, big changes.

## **DISCUSS:**

What do you think you could learn from one full day of food tracking?

## **DO:**

Share the following (if not mentioned by participants):

- Amounts you are eating, including calories
- When you are eating, including snacking throughout the day
- Times of the day that are more challenging
- Places that make healthy food choices harder
- Your eating habits

## **From Tracking to Taking Action (5 minutes)**

## **SAY:**

Let's talk about how one day of food tracking can help. Please look at "From Tracking to Taking Action" on page 7 in the Participant Guide.



For a virtual session, use the screen share feature to display “From Tracking to Taking Action” from the Participant Guide for all participants to view.

## DO:

Facilitate a conversation that clearly shows how tracking food highlights areas where simple actions can be taken to help prevent or delay type 2 diabetes.

Share the following ideas:

- As you track your food, you are looking for eating habits that can be adjusted to include more foods filled with healthy nutrients and fewer foods high in salt and high in calories from sugar or fat.
- Look for sources of calories that you can cut easily without really noticing, like adding less sugar in your coffee or replacing a soda with calorie-free sparkling water or seltzer.

## SAY:

Take a moment and think about what you are looking to learn from your food tracking. What could you do with this information to make progress on your goals?

You are welcome to share your ideas with the group if you like.



For a virtual session, use an online whiteboard or Word document to collect participant responses. You can then share it again at the beginning of the next session, if appropriate.

## SAY:

Your individual goals are very interesting. Thank you for sharing with the group. We will follow up with each other at our next session to see what else we learned! Now let’s move on and talk about other tracking methods.

## Tracking Methods (5 minutes)

**SAY:**

Please look at the “Tracking Methods” list on page 8 in the Participant Guide.



For a virtual session, use the screen share feature to display “Tracking Methods” from the Participant Guide for all participants to view.

**SAY:**

As you can see on this list, there are many ways to track food. And it may take some time to determine which strategy works for you. Perhaps you want all the details and tracking every day makes sense. Maybe you know lunch is challenging for you and tracking just that meal may be most helpful in the short term.

The goal is to select a method that makes sense for you so that you can make changes to meet your goals. You don't have to track every single thing you eat every day to see benefits.



Time Estimate: 5 minutes  
Method: Presentation

This part of the session will help participants make a connection between serving size, the general quality of the food they are buying and eating, and the balance of nutrients the food contains.

## **SAY:**

Now that you know how to measure one serving of a food item, you can find out all sorts of useful facts about it. Please look at “Making Sense of Food Labels,” starting on page 9 in the Participant Guide.



For a virtual session, consider displaying “Make Sense of Food Labels” from the Participant Guide on your screen as you review each category.

## **DO:**

Review the sample label briefly. Pay special attention to the section on serving size.

## **SAY:**

So, you can see why food labels are so useful.

## **DISCUSS:**

Besides reading labels, how could you find out nutrition facts about your food?

## **DO:**

Share the following suggestions (if not mentioned by participants):

- Online
- Recipes
- Food tracking apps

## **SAY:**

Please look at FDA’s “The Nutrition Facts Label: Look for It and Use It!” infographic on page 11 in your Participant Guide.



For a virtual session, consider displaying “Make Sense of Food Labels” from the Participant Guide on your screen as you review each category.

## **DO:**

Review it briefly and encourage participants to give it a closer look prior to their next grocery shopping trip.



Time Estimate: 2 minutes

## **SAY:**

Please look at your Action Plan Journal. Let's spend the next few minutes making a new action plan.

Keep in mind what worked and what didn't work well for you since our last session. Are there any changes that you want to make to your new routines? Are you ready for a new routine?

Also keep in mind what we discussed today about tracking your eating.

As you try out and practice your new routine, make sure to add in the following to make it automatic:

- Make your new routine easy and the old one harder to follow.
- Build in a healthy reward.
- Create times to repeat and practice your new routines.

If you are ready to add another routine, complete these 3 steps:

1. Identify what current routine needs to change or stop.
2. Plan a new routine that helps you make a positive change that will stick.
3. List cues or hints for when to use your new routine.

## **DO:**

Give participants a few minutes to make their action plan.

## **SAY:**

Please look at "Food Tracking Module" and "Personalized Pledge" on pages 12 and 13 in the Participant Guide.

I encourage everyone to review this "Food Tracking" module. This interactive module will provide some food tracking practice and helpful tips for getting the most out of tracking your food. I also encourage everyone to take the pledge. Commit to your food tracking as a way to prevent or delay type 2 diabetes.

## DO:

Tell participants to follow the links provided to access the “Food Tracking Module” and “Personalized Pledge.”

“Food Tracking Module”: [www.cdc.gov/diabetes/programs/preventt2/quiz.html?week=5](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/programs/preventt2/quiz.html?week=5)

“Personalized Pledge”: [www.cdc.gov/diabetes/programs/preventt2/pledge.html?pledge=2](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/programs/preventt2/pledge.html?pledge=2)



Demonstrate how to navigate to the Personal Success Tool module while sharing your screen.



Time Estimate: 3 minutes

## SAY:

Please look at the Food Tracking Activity and the Weekly Food Log again. What could be fun about tracking your food? Share which method you think you'll try and what you hope to figure out through tracking.

Remember, if tracking a whole day is too much, stick to tracking one meal for the entire week or another tracking activity that you find helpful. For a reminder on different ways you can track, see "Tracking Methods" on page 8 in the Participant Guide.

You don't need to show me your tracking unless you would like to. This is a tool for you.

## SAY:

We have some other things to help you out. Please look at "How To Overcome Challenges" on page 14 in the Participant Guide.



For a virtual session, use the screen share feature to display "How To Overcome Challenges" from the Participant Guide for all participants to view.

## SAY:

"How To Overcome Challenges" shows some common challenges and ways to overcome them. Write your own ideas in the "Other Ways to Overcome" column. Check off each idea you try in the future.

## DISCUSS:

What might you find challenging about tracking your food? What could help you remember to track your food (for example taking out the tracking form before you eat)? What resources you have tried that you would like to share with the group?



# Summary and Closing

Participant Guide  
N/A

## **DO:**

For participants who are interested in working with a registered dietitian nutritionist, suggest they talk with their doctor or refer them to the Academy of Dietetics and Nutrition: [www.eatright.org/find-an-expert](http://www.eatright.org/find-an-expert).

## **ASK:**

Does anyone have questions about anything we talked about today?

## **DO:**

Answer questions as needed.

## **SAY:**

Next time, we'll talk about the things you tried at home, including your action plan. We'll also talk about [include specific topics that will be presented in the next session].

Thank you for coming to this session. Remember to bring your Participant Guide and Action Plan Journal to the next session.

End of meeting.