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**Keys to Embracing Aging**

**Facilitator Guide**

**Purpose**

*Keys to Embracing Aging* introduces 12 healthy behavior practices that encourage optimal aging throughout the life span. The 12 keys of optimal aging include:

1. Positive Attitude
2. Eating Smart and Healthy
3. Physical Activity
4. Brain Activity
5. Social Activity
6. Tuning-in to the times
7. Safety
8. Know Your Health Numbers
9. Stress Management
10. Financial Affairs
11. Sleep
12. Taking a Time for You

**Background/Introduction**

Aging in an inevitable and unavoidable process that affects each and every one uniquely. Aging brings on many changes as a person develops throughout the lifespan. The way in which you take care of yourself through the years both physically and mentally will impact the way in which you age. Many of our lifestyle behaviors and choices are integrated, thus there is a strong association between healthy lifestyles, prevention and longevity. No one knows this better than centenarians, people who are 100 years old and older. America’s population of centenarians is the largest in the world and the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population. Today, approximately 70,000 Americans are 100+ years old. This number is expected to rise to 600,000 by 2050 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).

Centenarian studies demonstrate that life does not diminish with aging. In fact, 100 year olds are teaching us that the acceptance of aging can be a positive, joyful, and exciting experience. Today’s elders share their knowledge and wisdom to help us better engineer a positive approach to the aging process (Buettner, 2008; Reuters, 2007).

The *Keys to Embracing Aging* program was created out of a collaborative effort from University of Kentucky Family Life Specialist, Amy Hosier, Ph.D., and the University of Arkansas Gerontology Specialist, LaVona Traywick, Ph.D. This interactive program highlights 12 keys aimed at helping you to grow old gracefully, successfully, and with increased longevity, based primarily on findings primarily from centenarian studies and the advice from those who participated. *Keys to Embracing Aging* will influence attitude, nutrition, physical activity, nutrition, brain health, social activity, technology, safety, medical literacy, financial security, sleep, and taking time for you.

**Lesson Objectives**

1. To teach participants that healthy behaviors and choices across the lifespan affect future health and well-being.
2. To teach participants that healthy behaviors and choices across the lifespan affect optimal aging.
3. To illustrate how lifestyle behaviors and choices are integrated.

**Target Audience:** This program can be adapted and made fun for people of all ages and professions. For adolescents and young adults, this is a powerful lesson that can follow an age simulation as it reinforces healthy behaviors and lifestyles over time to live longer, better, happier lives. Middle age adults may resonate with the information because they are today’s primary caregivers to aging parents. Middle aged adults are also facing increasing changes and challenges associated with their own aging process. Older adults will benefit because it is never too late to adapt healthy life style behaviors. Groups of different generations may provide for some powerful discussion.

**Optimal Group Size:** This lesson can accommodate both small and large groups.

**Estimated Program Time:** 45 to 60 minutes. Each key could also be broken down into 12, 15 minute lessons.

**Program Materials and Supplies**

* Marketing tools:
	+ Marketing/Recruitment advertisement
	+ Information Releases (one 150-500 word release for each topic)
	+ Radio Consumer Tips (one 60-second tip for each topic)
* PowerPoint presentation
* Facilitator script (in PowerPoint notes section)
* Post evaluation instrument
* Optional follow-up evaluation instrument
* Publication handouts (14 total)

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| --- | --- |
| * 00. Introduction to Keys to Aging
* 1. Positive Attitude
* 2. Eating Smart and Healthy
* 3. Physical Activity
* 4. Brain Activity
* 5. Social Activity
* 6. Tuning-in to the Times
 | * 7. Safety
* 8. Know Your Health Numbers
* 9. Stress Management
* 10. Financial Affairs
* 11. Sleep
* 12. Taking Time for You
* 13. Time for You Activity: Bucket List
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**Potential Collaborators:**

* AARP
* Alzheimer’s Association
* Area Agencies on Aging
* Department of Health and Human Services (State or National)
* Emergency Responders (Police, Fire, EMT)
* Financial Advisor
* Health Care Professionals (doctors, nurse, pharmacist)
* Librarian
* Life Coach
* Nutritionist
* Red Cross
* Senior Center
* Therapists (Physical, Occupational, Speech, Mental Health, Marriage and Family Therapy)
* YMCA or Fitness Center

**Before the Lesson Begins**

 Space:

* Confirm the meeting room and time.

Lesson:

* Gain familiarity with all aspects of the program, including objectives, activities, presentation, script and evaluation instrument
* Practice presenting the program. Become comfortable with coordinating the slides, script, and any supplemental information. Staying true to the material, make personal or additional notes to emphasize certain points and/or invite additional audience participation as needed.

Materials:

* Print PowerPoint for a handout
* Print Publications for handouts

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| * 00. Introduction to Keys to Aging
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* Print post- evaluation instrument

Technology:

* Make sure the computer and projector are working
* Make sure you can retrieve and display the program PowerPoint presentation

**Day of the Lesson/Before participants arrive:**

Space:

* Set up the meeting room

Technology:

* Make sure the computer and projector are working
* Make sure you can retrieve and display the program PowerPoint

Materials:

* Bring PowerPoint handout
* Bring Publication Handouts
* Bring post evaluation instrument
* Bring supplies (if needed) for optional activities

**Program Procedure:**

* Distribute program handouts (PowerPoint and 14 Publications)
* Start the PowerPoint presentation, beginning with the title slide (slide 1). Introduce yourself to the audience and thank everyone for coming.
* Follow the facilitator script. See “notes” section of the PowerPoint presentation

**Optional Activities and Supplies Needed:**

Each of the 12 keys has an optional activity to aid in program presentation and delivery. Depending on the audience and the time allotted for your presentation, you may choose to do one or up to all of the activities. Listed below are the activities that accompany each “key.”

**Introductory Activity: Attitudes about aging (Group Discussion)**

**Supplies Needed:** Dry erase board or easel with paper, writing utensil

1. As a group, what words come to mind when you hear the words AGE, AGING, and OLD? (make a list).
2. Count how many words are positive and how many words are negative. Usually, there are more negative words than positive. Why is this? Discuss how aging is influenced by:
	* Society/Media (we live in a culture that values youth…we grow up knowing/thinking this. As a result, older adults are at higher risk for feeling like a burden, that they have no purpose, that aches/pains/frailty are “normal.”)
	* Ageism (negative stereotyping of older adults)

4. To help end on a positive note, briefly discuss the positive words from the brainstorm and transition to the purpose of the “Keys to Embracing Aging” program--healthy behavior practiced throughout the lifespan encourages optimal aging.

**The Keys to Embracing Aging:**

1. **Positive Attitude**

Choose one or both of the following activities:

**Activity 1: Is the Glass Half Full or Empty? (Group Discussion).**

**Supplies Needed:** Dry erase board or easel with paper, writing utensil

Ask the participants as a group to brainstorm several concerns that range from controversial issues such as abortion or fun issues such as ice-cream flavors. List the concerns/issues on a dry erase board or large piece of paper. After the list is written, ask the participants to state what they are FOR vs. AGAINST. When you are against something, you may sound and likely even feel negative. People can interpret your negativity as a personal attack and feel less likely to cooperate when they think you are against them. When you are “for” something, you are focusing your energy and thoughts more positively (see examples below). Positive attitudes not only contribute to well-being, but they also contribute to healthier, more meaningful collaborations with others.

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| **Topic:** | **Instead of Saying:**  | **Say…** |
| Abortion | I am against abortion. | I am for pro-life.  |
| Chocolate Ice cream | I don’t like chocolate. | I like vanilla.  |

**Activity 2:** **You Don’t Say (Group Activity)**

**Supplies Needed:** **None**

Another way to change your attitude to being more positive is by being more positive to others. Ask each participant to pay at least two sincere compliments to every person in the room. The key word is **sincere**. People care what you think about them. They appreciate your mentioning their good work or hard effort. Therefore, when the participants pay a compliment and recognize the individual, have them be specific in their compliments. For example, don’t just say, “You look nice today” but say “You look very nice in your blouse. It is a pretty color.”

In return, the participants must accept sincere compliments. Deflecting a compliment often draws unwanted attention and belittles both you and the person offering the compliment. During this activity, have the participants practice saying, "Thank you." They may be pleased with how gracious they become after this activity.

**2. Eating Smart and Healthy (Individual and/or group activity/discussion)**

**Supplies Needed: Eating Smart and Healthy MyPlate worksheet; pens/pencils**

Ask participants to think about the last lunch or dinner they ate. Using the “Eating Smart and Healthy MyPlate” worksheet, ask participants to write down each food and drink item in the proper MyPlate quadrant. Then ask the group whether or not their plate represented all of the food groups? Ask if half their lunch or dinner was fruits and vegetables? Ask if at least half of their grains were whole grains? Ask if their protein was lean or low-fat and whether or not their dairy was fat-free or low-fat? Recommend participants to further track their foods and nutrition the USDA SuperTracker at https://www.supertracker.usda.gov/. The SuperTracker website also provides tips and support to help people make healthier choices, including physical activity.

**3. Physical Activity (Group Exercise Activity)**

**Supplies Needed: Chair with a sturdy back.**

Of the 4 types of exercise, balance, endurance, strength training and flexibility/stretching, balance exercises are the least well known, but still important. Therefore, let’s practice a balancing exercise today. Ask participants who are able to stand up and:

1. \*Balance on one leg.
2. \*Balance on one leg with their eyes closed. (It will be more difficult with their eyes closed as they will not have visual clues to help them balance.)

\*Encourage people to stand behind their chair and use the back to help steady themselves and to prevent falling.

While still standing, ask participants to try a balance exercise that also incorporates stability, the Forward Toe Touch/Arm Reach:

1. Place your feet shoulder-width apart. Raise your hands to your shoulders with your palms facing forward.
2. Extend your right arm and place your left foot forward, pointing down with your toes and touching the floor.
3. Return to the starting position.
4. Extend your left arm and place your right foot forward, pointing down with your toes and touching the floor
5. Return to the starting position.
6. Do 2 to 3 sets of 10 repetitions.

**4. Brain Activity (Group Activity)**

**Supplies Needed: paper, pens/pencils, radio or music**

Background information: Neurobics are aerobic exercises for the brain. Neurobics are fascinating—and challenging—because you can use all of the senses to exercise your brain, which helps your brain get stronger by growing new cells. Neurobics force you out of our habitual routines that do not demand as much brain power. For example, you don’t think about the way in which you brush your teeth every night—you just do it. But if you were to brush with you non-dominant hand, you will have to work harder to properly brush. This same concept can be applied to getting dressed, eating, or doing other familiar activities, including driving a new route home from the store or cleaning the kitchen last if you usually clean it first. Today, let’s try a couple of neurobic activities:

1. Draw a picture of your family while listening to music.
2. Use your non-dominant hand to write a sentence about today’s lesson.
3. Engage in conversation with a partner, but instead of talking, use body language.

**5. Social Activity (Group Discussion)**

**Supplies Needed: None**

Ask the participants to brainstorm and share with the group ways that they seek meaningful social interactions.

**6. Tuning-in to the Times (Group Discussion)**

**Supplies Needed: None**

Ask the participants to brainstorm and share with the group ways that they tune-in or feel discouraged/overwhelmed when it comes to technology.

1. **Safety (Group Activity)**

**Supplies Needed: Pen/pencil and handouts: 1) “What are you doing to prepare?” 2) “Ready on a budget” and 3) “FEMA Family Emergency Plan”**

According to the Red Cross, a basic action plan includes: (1) an emergency supply kit, (2) a plan for evacuation (including where to meet, and what to do if family is separated), and (3) being informed of potential disasters or emergencies that may occur in your area. Before an action plan can be take place, people need to discern what they know, what they think they know that is not accurate, and what they don’t know. Pass out the handout, “What are you doing to prepare?” and have the participants take a few minutes to check the boxes. Next discuss a few of the responses. (All counties are different so be sure to check with your local county government for some of the answers. For example, do you have an official local evacuation route or does your county have a Citizen Corps Council?) Finally, pass out the handouts “Ready on a budget” and “Family Emergency Plan” and encourage your participants to go home and follow the suggestions.

**8. Know Your Health Numbers (Group Activity)**

**Supplies needed: Pen/pencil, paper, tape measures, calculators and BMI worksheet**

Keeping our body Mass Index (BMI) and waist circumference within healthy ranges affect our long term health. Therefore, today we will practice calculating BMI and/or measuring our waist circumference.

1. Pass out a paper, pencils, calculators and tape measures.
2. BMI: Ask participants to calculate their BMI with the following formula:

weight (lb) / [height (in)]2 x 703. Interpretation: A healthy BMI should be between 18-25.

1. Waist Circumference: Instruct participants to measure their waist size: Place a tape measure around your bare abdomen just above your hip bone. Be sure that the tape is snug, but does not compress your skin, and is parallel to the floor. Relax, exhale, then measure. Interpretation: Males: < 40; Females: < 35

Discussion: While respecting people’s privacy, discuss ways in which healthy numbers can be obtained: (Examples include: healthy/smart nutrition, exercise, stress management & sleep.)

1. **Stress Management (Group Activity)**

**Supplies needed: Pen/pencil, Stress Management worksheet**

To manage your stress, it is helpful to know what resources you do have. Many resources fall into broad categories such as supportive social networks, personal skills and interests, as well as your life experiences. Ask participants to complete the Stress Management Worksheet:

1. Write a list of specific resources that you currently have in Column 1 (Examples may include: helpful friends, strong family, savings, coping ability, hobbies, caring minister, great family traditions, creativity, experiences with challenges, religious faith, pay and leisure activities, local library, personal journal realistic expectations, healthy lifestyle, family pet, mentors, advisors, or counselors.)
2. Make a new list that includes all of the stresses and challenges you are currently facing in Column 2 (Examples may include: balancing caregiving and work, health problems, job loss, divorce, or decision-making).
3. Take your list of challenges (Column 2) and compare/pair it with your list of existing resources (Column 1). Can you identify any resources that can help you deal with your challenge? Do you have stressors that cannot be addressed with existing resources? Circle these stressors in Column 2.
4. For any stressors that do not have a resource, create a list of resources that would help and think about ways in which you can seek such help in Column 3.
5. Finally, discuss the strength of identifying existing and needed resources. Brainstorm resources for particular stressors as a group.

 **10. Financial Affairs (Group Activity)**

Choose one or both of the following activities:

**Activity One: Rags to Riches.**

**Supplies needed: Pen/pencil, paper, dry erase board or easel with paper**

Often we don’t realize how rich we are in comparison to the rest of the world. Ask the participants to:

1. Think about how blessed they are.
2. Ask participants to consider everything on their body (clothes, shoes, jewelry, glasses/contact, tattoos, hearing aids, etc.) and the cost associated with each item. Ask participants to add these costs and to write the total on a piece of paper. Tell participants not to write their name on this paper.
3. Ask participants to pass their papers to the front.
4. On a dry erase board or tablet, list the various totals that were handed forward. Discuss with the participants whether or not they are surprised at how high or how low the figures are.

**Activity Two: Build Your Savings.**

**Supplies needed: Pen/pencil, University of Arkansas Fact Sheet FSFCS43 “Build your Savings”**

(http://www.uaex.edu/Other\_Areas/publications/PDF/FSFCS43.pdf)

Ask the participants to take a few minutes to complete the University of Arkansas fact sheet, “Our Family’s Goals Wish List.” If more than one family member is present for the program, encourage families to compare/contrast/discuss their lists and/or discuss the goals and wish lists as a group in addition to the importance of having such goals and discussion.

**11. Sleep (Group Relaxation Activity)**

**Supplies needed: None**

Often when people cannot fall asleep they get impatient, which can result in not being able to sleep. To help yourself fall asleep, try to first relax. This starts with staying in the bed with the lights off, as moving around can make you more awake. Let’s try some relaxation techniques now. It’s okay if you snooze off, we will wake you up!

1. The first thing I want you to do is to focus on your breathing. Consciously slow your breathing to a particular count (*3 to 5 seconds in and out is good but it will vary by person*). Counting focuses your mind and deep breathing relaxes you. Being relaxed and slowing your heart rate will make it easier to fall asleep.
2. Now that your breathing is slow and deep, picture a scene, a familiar place where you are happy—the beach, the mountains, your backyard. Visualize yourself moving around your place until you find a comfortable place to sit or lie down. In your imagination, sit or lie down and be comfortable there. When you are restless in bed trying to fall asleep, moving around in your favorite place in your mind can help relieve that restlessness. Once you are calm in your mind, you can become calm in your body.
3. Recheck your breathing. Slowly breathe in and out. Take deep breaths. Are you still picturing your familiar place? Are you lying down in your mind? While you picture yourself in your favorite place in your mind, we are going to relax your muscles. Start by tensing up your toes for a few seconds while you breathe, then relax. Do it again. Tense the arches of your feet, hold, relax. Now your calves muscles…. (*Walk the participants through tensing and relaxing their muscles up their body and end at the face.*) By having this body awareness, it can help remove body tension and make you more comfortable enabling sleep to come easier.
4. Are you relaxed? Do you feel sleepy? Open your eyes and stretch. You can try these and other techniques at home to help you fall asleep at night.

**12. Taking Time for You (Individual activities/Group discussions)**

Choose one or all of the following activities:

**Activity 1: Get to Know You (Individual Activity/Group discussion)**

**Supplies Needed: Pens/pencils, Recipe Card worksheet. You may want to ask participants to bring a photo of themselves for the recipe cards.**

This activity encourages participants to think carefully about the unique individual characteristics that make them who they are (a unique, one-of-a-kind individual who is a blend of “ingredients”). For example, you may be a mix of strength, 8 hours of sleep, and determination combined with short legs, blue eyes, brown hair and laughter and passion, to make a complete recipe of you.

1. Pass out Recipe Card worksheet
2. Read directions to the group
* Think carefully about your personality, values, what makes you happy, what makes you special, favorite foods, hobbies, or any other characteristics that make up you. Use strong adjectives to describe you. Brainstorm first and then write down your ideas on the front of this card.
* On the front of your card, list the ingredients and measurements that make you, *YOU* (1/2 cup love; 1 tsp. orneriness).
* Provide directions on how to mix your ingredients together.
* Name your recipe.
* If you have a photo of yourself, include it with the recipe.
1. Allow 3-5 minutes for individual brainstorming/writing
2. Allow 5-8 minutes for group sharing (optional)

**Activity 2: Take Care of Yourself (Group Discussion)**

**Supplies Needed: None.**

Ask participants to brainstorm about the many ways to take care of yourself. Some answers may include: Sleep, Exercise, Eat healthy, Laugh more, De-clutter or organize your house and/or office, Read a book, Walk your pet, Play with your kids/grandkids, Join a club, Go to your doctor for checkups…

**Activity 3: Bucket List (Individual activity and Group discussion)**

**Supplies Needed: Pens/pencils, Bucket List worksheet.**

A bucket list is a list of things you want to do before you die. Keep in mind that not everyone wants to jump out of planes or climb mountains. A bucket list can also include dreams, aspirations, plans and decisions for the future.

1. Pass out Bucket List worksheet
2. Read the directions:
	* In column 1, write down your dreams, aspirations, plans and/or decisions you want to make or anticipate making in the future.
	* Include your age/date that you think these events might take place in Column 2.
3. Allow 2-3 minutes for participants to brainstorm and write
4. Allow 5-8 minutes for group sharing/discussion

**Resources for Additional Information:**

[**www.uaex.edu/keystoaging**](http://www.uaex.edu/keystoaging)

**AARP** (www.AARP.org or 1-877-434-7598)

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that helps people 50 and over improve the quality of their lives.

**Alzheimer’s Association** (www.alz.org or1.800.272.3900)

The world’s leadingvoluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research.

**American Diabetes Association** (ww.diabetes.org or 1-800-342-2383)

The ADA fights to prevent and cure diabetes and improve the lives of all people affected by it.

**American Heart Association** (www.heart.org or 1-800-242-8721)

The AHA builds healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke.

**Beloit College Mindset List (http://www.beloit.edu/mindset)**

The Mindset List was created at Beloit College in 1998 to reflect the world view of entering first year students. It started with the members of the class of 2002, born in 1980 and has turned into a globally reported and utilized guide to the intelligent if unprepared adolescent consciousness.

**Blue zones: How to live longer** ([www.bluezones.com](http://www.bluezones.com))

**For the book: Buettner, Dan. (2008). The blue zones: Lessons for living longer from the people who’ve lived the longest. Washington, DC: National Geographic.**

Researchers visited five places around the world where people live the longest to figure out their secrets of healthy longevity. People in the Blue Zones nurture strong social networks, consume a plant-based diet, eat in moderation and incorporate daily, natural physical activity into their lives. The Blue Zones profile this journey.

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).** (www.cdc.gov)

The CDC maintains several departments concerned with occupational safety and health. Each department provides expertise, information, and tools that people and communities need to protect their health – through health promotion, prevention of disease, injury and disability, and preparedness for new health threats.

**eXtension.org**

eXtension provides research-based and credible information you can use every day to improve your life.

**Fit in 10** **(University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service)**

“Fit in 10” is a research-based exercise program including the “Increasing Physical Activity as We Age” Fact Sheets, an exercise DVD, and exercise routines on posters. The website is <http://www.arfamilies.org/health\_nutrition/fitin10/default.htm>

**Matter of Balance**

A Matter of Balance emphasizes practical strategies to reduce fear of falling and increase activity levels. For more information contact the University of Kentucky FCS Extension offices at (859) 257-3877 or go to the national website at www.mmc.org/mh\_body.cfm?id=432.

**Mayo Clinic Health Information** (www.mayoclinic.com)

Mayo Clinic health information helps you find information on hundreds of conditions, check your symptoms, and improve your lifestyle.

**MoneyWise (U of Kentucky Cooperative Extension). (http://www2.ca.uky.edu/moneywise/)**

Managing in Tough Times Initiative assists families is managing and recovery from the current economic situation.

**National** **Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)** ([www.nimh.hih.gov](http://www.nimh.hih.gov) or 1-866-615-6464)

NIMH transforms the understanding and treatment of mental illnesses and to pave the way for prevention, recovery, and cure.

**National Safety Council** (www.nsc.org/ or 1-800 621-7615)

The National Safety Council is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to save lives by preventing injuries and deaths at work, in homes and communities and on the road through leadership, research, education and advocacy. The National Safety Council granted permission to repost the various safety tips used on the Keys to Embracing Aging Safety publication.

**National Sleep Foundation** (http://www.sleepfoundation.org/ or (703) 243-1697)

The National Sleep Foundation is a charitable, educational, and scientific not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving sleep health and safety through education, public awareness, and advocacy.

**Small Steps to Wealth and Health** (http://njaes.rutgers.edu/sshw/ or (732) 932-9153, ext. 250)

This program is designed to motivate consumers to implement behavior change strategies that simultaneously improve their health and personal finances.

**The Power of Meaningful Intimacy (2004).**

Crumbaugh, J.C., & Henrion, R.P. (2004). The Power of Meaningful Intimacy: Key to successful relationships. Xlibris Corporation.

This book is a self-help psychological procedure with a spiritual (not necessarily religious) orientation, directed toward that segment of the population who have reached varying degrees of success in relationships of marriage, romance, occupation, education, business and society, but without knowing why life has not been completely fulfilling to them. We have helped these people for over thirty years to find new purpose in life, and to establish meaningful intimacies leading to new and deeper commitments. This reduces conflicts and makes living a relaxed pleasure rather than a tensive burden.

**Underwrite Laboratories (UL).**

http://www.ul.com/global/eng/pages/aboutul/ or http://www.safetyathome.com/home-safety/

UL is a global independent safety science company with more than a century of expertise innovating safety solutions from the public adoption of electricity to new breakthroughs in sustainability, renewable energy and nanotechnology. Dedicated to promoting safe living and working environments, UL helps safeguard people, products and places in important ways, facilitating trade and providing peace of mind.UL granted permission to repost the various safety tips used on the Keys to Embracing Aging Safety publication.

**United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) My Plate.**

(www.choosemyplate.gov/ or 1-888-779-7264)

MyPlate illustrates the five food groups that are the building blocks for a healthy diet using a familiar image—a place setting for a meal.

**Background/Introduction References:**

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 longest. Washington, DC: National Geographic.

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