

COMMUNITY COLLEGES
OF SPOKANE CAFÉS

Reduce Sodium



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~ Venesea Edwards, SFCC Dining Services Manager



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The Challenge

As more people depend on cafeterias and restaurants for a large percentage of their daily food, it is important that these food outlets work towards sodium reduction. Food served at these locations often contain high amounts of sodium before they reach the plate. This can lead to eating more than 1000 milligrams of sodium above the recommended amount.

Lower sodium options are available but are often overlooked for fear of losing customers. Managers and cooks, in fast-paced food service environments, don't have the time to find lower sodium products and create recipes using these products.

In Spokane County, where one in three adults has high blood pressure, reducing sodium in the diet may be one of the ways to help to lower customers' blood pressure and possible risk for heart disease and stroke.

What Worked and Why

Community Colleges of Spokane contracts with Sodexo for food service. Sodexo has a strong commitment to wellness as demonstrated by their Mindful meal program. Mindful recipes meet U.S. Department of Agriculture Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Executive Chef Dale Yates, Spokane Community College's Dining Services Manager, and Venesea Edwards, Spokane Falls Community College Dining Services Manager were successful in providing healthy options and reducing sodium in the foods they serve. Both cafes offer daily colorful, creative salad bars and healthy Mindful recipes at least once a week. Their menu choices appeal to faculty as well as commuter students who favor grab-and-go and traditional quick foods, such as burgers and fries.

Chef Dale created a lower sodium Southwest black bean recipe using his signature 83% reduced sodium spice

Reduced Sodium

Community College

April - May

PRODUCT	mgNa SAVED
Lower sodium black beans	301,320
Lower sodium kidney beans	41,490
No salt added diced tomatoes	2,545,148
Lower sodium ketchup	1,132,800
Lower sodium beef base	453,120
Lower sodium soup base	13,056,000
Total Saved	6,557,398 mgNa



Total Milligrams of Sodium

Equivalent to 57 containers (2)

*USDA recommended daily allowance

blend, onions and peppers. According to Chef Dale, black bean sales doubled since the new recipe was introduced in September 2015.

SFCC started purchasing lower sodium soup bases in December 2015 and prepared lower sodium soups daily with no loss in cafeteria sales. Venesea stated, "We use fresh herbs like lemon grass, dill, cilantro and parsley and fewer packaged products to flavor our entrees and soups." She received compliments from customers enjoying the healthier options.

Both colleges promoted fresh produce at the registers and used attractive signage to highlight healthy options. Chef Dale shared, "Having fresh bananas at the registers helps us sell one case of bananas, or 40 pounds, every two days."

n in 6 Products

Colleges of Spokane

May 2016



Sodium Saved: 6,557,398

(6 oz/ea) or 9,747 tsp of salt*

*Dose of salt for an adult is 1 tsp

About Community Colleges of Spokane

Spokane Community College (SCC) and Spokane Falls Community College (SFCC) are committed to student success through supportive environments and this includes their school cafés. The community colleges are one of Spokane’s largest employers with 1,225 staff educating and supporting 27,991 students. The two cafes serve close to 1,250 meals daily to students and faculty.

Sustainability

Sustainability looks promising at SCC and SFCC based on Sodexo’s commitment to wellness, stocking several lower sodium ingredients and the Food Services Managers motivation to keep the momentum going. According to Venesea, “We definitely plan to continue. Our new cook is very motivated to prepare foods with our lower sodium products.”

Spokane Community Colleges combined sodium reduction efforts saved 6,557,398 milligrams of sodium. In common measurements this is 57 rounds (26 ounces) of salt or 9,747 teaspoons of salt. Both Chef Dale and Venesea plan to continue using lower sodium products, preparing more Mindful recipe options, and promoting healthier choices to students and employees.



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*Executive Chef Dale Yates,
Spokane Community College’s Dining Services Manager*

Spokane Regional Health District's Role

The Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD) worked with the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) and two other local health jurisdictions to implement a three-year Sodium Reduction in Communities grant (2014-2016) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). SRHD used the following methods to help partners make changes.

- Encourage organizations to follow Washington Department of Health's Healthy Nutrition Guidelines (or similar guidelines).
- Assist partners in identifying key recipes and strategies to reduce sodium by at least 25 percent.
- Work with food vendors to increase the availability and accessibility of lower sodium products.
- Help with signage and placement of low sodium foods to increase visibility and customer awareness while maintaining or increasing sales of these items.
- Increase food service directors and cooks' knowledge of hidden sources of sodium and offer culinary training to increase flavor enhancement skills.



Spokane Regional Health District – Sodium Reduction
1101 W. College Ave., #200, Spokane, WA 99201
TEL 509.324.1531 | TDD 509.324.1464 | srhd.org

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