

Division of Diabetes Treatment and Prevention

Advancements in Diabetes Seminar

USDA Patient Education Resources: Fun, Easy, and Free Resources for Nutrition Education, Online Interactive Tools

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Kelli Begay:

-- welcome you to our webinar today.

Corey Holland:

Great! Thank you so much. Well, as everybody said, we will be talking about fun, easy, and free resources for nutrition education, and we'll be focusing on online interactive tools from the USDA but I also have some materials in here that can be printed, if you find that your participants need something that they can use without an internet connection. We will be talking about that as well.

To just go over today's topics in slide two, first we're going to be starting with talking about SuperTracker. This is one of our really popular interactive tools for tracking food and activity. I'll give some background about that and also go over the basic features. I'm going to talk a little bit about the groups feature that we have within SuperTracker and the reports that can be run as well as challenges that you can do with other SuperTracker users. And then lastly, I'll be talking about resources, both SuperTracker support materials as well as other resources that we have available.

On the next slide, this is just an intro. We're going to be talking about SuperTracker in this next segment of the presentation. First, what is SuperTracker? Some of you may have used it before but many of you probably are not familiar with it and that's why it's great that I have the opportunity to speak with you today. So SuperTracker is our interactive food and activity-tracking tool that was launched in December of 2011 and it serves as the public interface for the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Now, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans are really the basis of food recommendations for Americans. That document was recently updated in 2015, and so now, SuperTracker is also updated with the latest dietary guidelines.

So just to take a quick look at SuperTracker, SuperTracker provides personalized recommendations for what and how much to eat. It provides interactive self-monitoring tools where individuals can make healthy choices, manage their weight, and reduce their chronic disease risk.

The next slide, just so you know, SuperTracker is available on desktop of course, but it's also accessible on a tablet or a mobile phone. So while we don't have a standalone app that you have to go to the app store and download for either iPhones or android devices, you can just visit SuperTracker on a mobile device and automatically be sent to our mobile-friendly website. We actually made that choice consciously because with apps, there's a lot more cost involved to keep them up to date. And so we decided to go the mobile route and have the ability to have more features on the site.

In the next slide, this just gives you a little bit of information about the SuperTracker website and our usage that we have each month. So these numbers are all just an average monthly usage. So we have just over -- just under nine-and-a-half million page views. We have 772,000 user sessions and monthly we have about 130,000 new registered users. So we're still seeing a lot of traffic to the site despite it being five years old, so we're happy with that.

Okay. On the next slide, this is some of the features that you can use within SuperTracker. Users can determine what and how much to eat as I mentioned before. They can track their food, physical activities, and weight, and they can also personalize their experience with goal setting features, virtual coaching and journaling. So these are really the main uses of SuperTracker. We really want to empower people to take charge of their own health as much as possible when it comes to nutrition and physical activity. So we hope to give them all the tools that they would need to do that.

SuperTracker also offers detailed reports that analyze the food group and nutrient content of food. The foods that somebody has eaten or that they're planning to eat in the future. And we offer a variety of detailed reports that analyze your information. As you can see with the next image on this slide, users can look at their intake of all food groups and sub groups, such as dark greens from the vegetable group. So, not only are we encouraging people to eat their vegetables, but we want them to also be getting the dark green vegetables, the orange vegetables and so on. And the same thing in the whole grains category, we want them to -- not only be eating foods from the grain group but encouraging their whole grain consumption. So, that's a nice feature in SuperTracker because not everybody knows whether or not they're eating a whole grain and so this gives them other information to help them with those decisions.

Okay, in the next slide, the next thing we're going to do is talk about the Groups & Challenges feature available in SuperTracker and I'm actually going to pause here for just one moment to tell you that there is a lot that you can learn in SuperTracker. We had to kind of keep ourselves confined to this one-hour presentation, but SuperTracker, we can go through each feature separately in SuperTracker and have the whole presentation on just those features. I do encourage you to go to the website and look around and always contact us with any questions.

Next we'll be talking about groups and challenges. First of all, we'll talk about SuperTracker groups and this is a feature that we added just over two years ago because it was really frequently requested by our users. We wanted there to be some way that people could use SuperTracker together, whether or not it's a family using it at the same time or friends using it together, or more importantly, what we've heard from the most is educators or other community leaders trying to use it with a group of participants. So we created the groups function. And basically, now groups of people can use SuperTracker together towards their health and wellness goals, and anyone can create a group and invite others to join. This can be a really nice tool in the community setting if you have people who need a little extra motivation, maybe you want to use it as a group or help guide them in their use of it. This could be a nice tool for that.

Here we're just talking about why we're encouraging healthy eating behaviors through groups and challenges, and one of the things that we found is that studies show that habit is one of the most powerful predictors of eating behaviors. So when we can make healthy eating behaviors just a part of someone's routine, they have a lot more success. And the challenges, which I'll get into in just a little bit, provide participants with motivation to try out a healthy eating pattern and over time they can adopt those behaviors as part of their routine dietary habit.

Another reason that we're encouraging challenges is that kids are interested in challenges and identify them as a key motivator for behavior change. And we have a little data on that from some focus groups that were done. For SNAP teen focus groups, we found that teen students are interested in interactive activities that involve group competition. We also found that students and teachers prefer competition over other wellness activities and they rated it in the top tier of activities that will convince them to take

action. We know that peer pressure is out there for teens and we're hoping to kind of take that in a positive way and help each other be more healthy.

Another reason that we decided to develop challenges is that this is a trend in health and wellness space that is being emphasized out there, and that's competition and social support. There are a lot of people that wear a Fitbit who are now aware that they could track their steps, there are some of these tough mudder-running competitions out there and there are also different 30-day challenges. This is really just keeping in pace with what's out there and that's really -- that there's a competitive nature and also a social support network that people are coming to expect.

So who are the challenges for? Well, they really can be for anybody. We're seeing a lot of use in the classroom of course, but it can also be used for workplace wellness, within a family if you know you want to have a little family challenge. It's a free tool so why not give it a try. We're also seeing it with faith-based communities, social clubs and many other settings. So it really can be used in a lot of different ways.

Next, I'll transition into how someone can actually create a group and the challenge. So to create and manage a group of SuperTracker users, it's very easy. You have to set up a SuperTracker account like with most of our features so that we can save your information and there are public or private options available depending on your need. So for a public group, this means that anyone can search for your group and join it. Public groups can have up to 500 members and the group members do not share personal data with the group leader. Then we also have a private group option, and this is where members join by invitation only. So they have a specific access code that they receive from the group leader and that could be through email or any other way that you want to share that code and they have to have that code to join. Private groups are also limited to 150 members, so they're a little smaller and this is where group members actually have the option to share their data with the group leader. And that group leader can then run different reports on their group member's input.

So first, as I said, a group leader would have to create a SuperTracker account and they would have to be logged in and this is simply so we can save the group information. Then under the Group Menu, they would select Create Group, and then they could choose which type of groups, the public or private. And then next, they would need to fill out the Create Group form and this is where we're going to just collect some basic information about your group to identify it. You can select the group name and enter it. You can choose an end date if you want. So if you know you only want this group to be active for the summer time, you can choose a date where you want that group to end, but you don't have to if you want the group to just keep going, leave the field blank. You would select the leader display name. An organization name is also optional if you don't really have an organization to put in there, that's fine. And then in the bottom part of this slide, you'll see this shared information box and this is only for private groups. Here is where the group leader would select what types of information they want to collect. This may vary depending on your particular situation but you can choose to collect their age, gender, physical activity level, height and weight, their account activity, their food intake, physical activity data, their weight history and their personal goals. So that's all up to the group leader whether or not they want to collect that information. And then on the group member side, when they're joining the group, they would see all the things that they would be sharing before they choose to join. If there's anybody that has some kind of concern about joining the group, they would see all the information there before they join.

Further on in the Create Group form, they would fill out other information about the group. They would choose different tags about the group and these are basically ways to help other people find your group. You can choose an affiliation, a location or other tags such as hobbies, interest in sports, and we have over 240 tags to choose from. So, hopefully there's something relevant for each group being created.

And then at the very bottom of this form they have the option to choose an image, and we have some different foods, some activities that you can choose from for the image, and then a description of your group and that's basically so people can identify your group and know what the group is for. And when you're ready to create your group, you just click on the "Create" button and that creates your group.

And then the next slide, this is showing all of the different things that a group leader can do. First off, they can invite others to join their group via email or with a group specific access code. For public groups, they can actually also share the group on Facebook if they want to have people join that way. They can also view and manage the members in their group. If you need to see, get a full list of everybody who's in the group, maybe somebody is no longer in the area and they need to be removed from the group, you can do that. You can also run reports on your group members' data. You can run roll up reports on their dietary, physical activity data, and this is really a nice option if you have a group of people that you're trying to kind of keep track of and see how they're doing with their healthy eating and lifestyle goals, you can do that. You can also send messages to group members and the group members can link the message center to their email so they can get emails from you right from SuperTracker. And lastly you can create the challenge for your group, and we'll talk about that in a little more detail later on in this presentation.

Next, I'm going to show you a little bit about the reports that a group leader can run. So group leaders can run roll up reports of group members' dietary and physical activity data. Again, this is just in private groups. On the group report's page, there are three report choices. There's Food Groups, Calories & Nutrients, there's a Meal Summary, and there's also Physical Activity. So you can run any of those three reports.

To run the Food Groups, Calories & Nutrients report which our most popular report because it really gives you a lot of information about the dietary intake of your members. You would choose the members in your group that you would like to see on the report and we do have a checkbox at the top if you want it to just run it for everybody. You would select the date range. So if you know you've encouraged participants to track their intake for three days or a set amount of time, you can choose that date range. You can choose the food groups, the calories and the nutrients that you want to track. Maybe you don't want to see everything you're just focusing on whole grains. You could choose to just run a report on that. Maybe you've been talking a bit more about added sugars or saturated fat. You could run a report on just those items. So you really can customize the report to meet your needs. And then you can choose to either run a group report or a member report and we'll look at two examples of those to see what the differences are.

This first screenshot is looking at the sample group report and this is where you click on the group report button, not the member report button, and you're seeing basically a summary of the group. It's showing you how your group did as a whole for their vegetable consumption as an example, you can do that. For the okay bar, we had four -- members and that's 57% of the group. Over, there was one member in the group that's 14% and then under was two members. So you could see at a glance how the groups are doing with their vegetable consumption and so on for the other categories that you might have picked for this report.

In this screenshot, we're actually looking at the Member Report and this is where, if you use select the Member Report, you can see on more of an individual basis how your group members are doing. You can see that the first couple of people, whether or not they met their vegetable goal, their recommendation, you can see Antonio did, his status and listed as "okay", and that means that his target was that he tracked foods to meet his target for vegetable and so on down the list.

On this we'll talk a little bit about SuperTracker challenges. Group leaders can create a challenge for their group right from their group page. The last button on the right there is to create a challenge and when you click on that you'll see on the next slide, you can choose some different options for your challenge. So the first one, first decision you have to make is whether or not you're going to be running

a group challenge or a versus challenge. A group challenge means you challenge other members of the group and the versus challenge means you're challenging another group. So you can kind of think about different scenarios for this. If you have a group and you want everybody in your group to just challenge each other, then you choose the group challenge and that's used more commonly. But you can also see that there would be some applications for a versus challenge. Maybe you have a class that you teach every week to a certain group in the community, and you have another group that meets on a different day that covers similar things. So you could have one group challenge the other in kind of a friendly competition in that way. So there's a lot of different ways that you can use these different options.

This is just an example of how you would do the versus challenge if this is something that you wanted to do. You would actually search for the other group to challenge and you could do that by the group name, tags about the group or the specific access code. And then if you chose -- when you saw them in the search results list, you can click on the "Challenge" button and that would set up the challenge between your two groups. Now on the other side, the other group's leader would get a message saying that they were challenged and were invited into this challenge against your group. So that's just giving you a little information about that.

This slide is showing what we call the challenge creation wizard and this is where you get to select what kind of a challenge you're going to run. We have a few different options for you. We have some different preset challenges and I'll talk about those in the next slide. But here you can see you choose the type of challenge on the left, and then you get to enter a description for the challenge, a name for the challenge. You can, if you want, you can enter a winner rewards. So if you have some kind of incentive that you'll be giving out maybe it's a coupon for something, or some other kind of reward, you can enter it there. And then you can also choose to create an anonymous leaderboard and you can choose the start date and the end date for the challenge.

This slide is showing all the different options you have for challenges. So as I said, we have three preset challenges. We have a MyPlate Challenge, MyPlate Plus Challenge, MyPlate, MyWins, and the Custom Challenge. So first, I'll talk about the MyPlate Challenge. This is a five week challenge where there are physical activities tracked every week and each week we have a new food group introduced. So week one would be fruit and physical activity. Then week two would be physical activities, fruits and vegetables and so on. So we continue to add a new food group to the challenge and that's how the MyPlate Challenge runs.

The next one is the MyPlate Plus Challenge, and this is similar to MyPlate Challenge but it also adds a little complexity because within the last three days, participants have to use the food tracker to stay under their limit for added sugar, saturated fat, and sodium. That's a pretty challenging challenge because it's long and it's pretty complex.

And then on the other end of the scale we have the MyPlate, MyWins Challenge and this is our simplest challenge designed to just be a really quick, fun thing for people to do. This is two days and each day we ask participants to track two foods from each food group and two physical activities. So it's sort of our two, two, two challenge because two days, two foods from each food group, and then two physical activities.

And then lastly is our most popular option and this is the Custom Challenge where you can decide what kind of timeframe you want to have your challenge run for, and what you want to challenge your participants to do. You can choose to have just a three-day whole grain challenge and that's all you are going to focus on. You really can customize it anyway that you'd like and run a challenge based on those parameters.

This screen is showing -- I'm sorry, this should have been before, but on this screen it's showing what the other group would see on the versus challenge. So we can skip to the next slide.

So once a challenge is created, all members in the group receive a notification message with instructions for participating. This is just a sample of what they would see. They'd get a message in their message center that tells them what the challenge is about, the dates that the challenge is running and any other information that you decided to include in the description.

Now this slide is showing how participants earn points in a challenge. So, one thing that we've heard about over the past couple of years with SuperTracker is that tracking foods can be a little more complex than people might want to get into. It really just depends on your needs for tracking. Some people want to track everything about their diet and really see in detail how they're doing, but other people don't necessarily need that level of detail. So what we did with the challenges was really try to make it accessible to everybody to use. People who are participating in the challenge actually use this quick tracker. They don't have to worry about food amounts. They don't have to worry about selecting a very specific food item that they might be eating. They're really just trying to do their best at learning how to track and participate in the challenge. So for example, in this screenshot, we're looking at the grains tab and the user just has to select that they ate a whole grain bread and granola. They don't have to worry necessarily that they ate two slices of bread or one cup of oatmeal. They don't have to necessarily worry about the portions, just that they were taking steps to eat whole grain. So they really just have to click on each of the items that they ate, in each of the food groups and then they click "Submit" and this is how they earn points in the challenge.

We also wanted to give participants instant onscreen feedback to help motivate them to continue to do what they're doing. So as group members participate in a challenge, they receive encouragement messages along the way. Some of these might be tips, so this is showing a vegetable tip. Some of them might be progress messages such as the blue one that's showing you you're half way there in the physical activity challenge, "Keep moving to the finish line, you're doing a great job!" And we also have some other congratulatory messages that will pop up after that.

Participants also have an opportunity to earn some bonus points and this is through these quick quiz questions that will pop up at random, that are on challenges that are three days or longer. So this is showing you there's a little -- you'll get asked if you want to answer a quiz question and if you answer it correctly you get 30 bonus points. So, not only are we kind of trying to add a little fun element to it, but we're also increasing participant knowledge because they may learn something that they didn't know beforehand.

Okay, this slide is showing you the group challenge leaderboard. So as people in your group are participating in the challenge, they could see their progress on the leaderboard, and they can also see how other people in the group are doing. So we can see from here that we have Eduardo, Keelani, and Julianna in these top three spots, and you can see some of the other people are listed. They have some lower points. Some people haven't participated yet, but this gives you an idea of how people would see their points and see the points of other in the group.

So those show the top three members' standings for all group members, and then on the right-hand side, under that section that says "My Points", they're going to actually see a summary of their entries and the points that they earn for that. So, we also reward people for tracking things on the same day that they ate them, because we know that people do a better job at tracking if they do it as soon as they can. So we give a same day entry bonus and that gives them points for entering things for the same day that they ate them on. This person also added broccoli, so they got points for that and they added some activities that also earn some points.

Here we're looking at the leaderboard for a versus challenge. So, if you do choose to have your group challenge another group, this is the kind of leaderboard that you would see and you can see that we're -- you can tell the two teams apart because we have one in blue and one in red, and you could see which members from each group are contributing because you could see which team they're on based

on their color. And for this, the winning group would be determined by the average points per member. And the reason that we do that is that you won't necessarily have groups of the exact same size competing. So by doing it the average points per member that gives everybody a fair shot to have their group win.

One thing that I didn't mention too much before, is you can also have an anonymous leaderboard. So if you want to have a group challenge but you don't necessarily want everybody to know where everybody stands in the group because that could be a sensitive subject, but you want people to know how they're doing, you can choose to have an anonymous leaderboard. And what somebody would see in this case is that you can see the person in first place is just listed as group member. So I don't know exactly who that is. But then, I'm in second place. So I can actually see my name. And then all I can see beyond that is just that there are other people in the group that are earning points and their standings. So, the only thing that I can see is my particular place and what I've done to earn points. This could be a nice option in school or any other setting where you don't necessarily want to have everybody's information there.

At the end of the challenge, participants will get a follow-up message and this gives them their final rank. It kind of gives them some -- celebrate some success, it gives them some motivation and tell them that they really did a great job, and it offers some ideas for moving forward. So, we hope that people will come back and use SuperTracker even after the challenge, because we know it does help them to incorporate some healthy eating behaviors. So, we want to give them some ideas for next steps and that's what we do here, the final message that they receive.

So now we've talked about SuperTracker as a whole and talked very briefly about the different features that SuperTracker has. We spent some time looking at the Groups & Challenges feature and how that could be used. And now I'm going to share with you some of the supporting resources that we have for SuperTracker, because we do know that there's a lot to it, and yet, we have the resources to go along with it so that people will in fact be able to use it.

So, one of our most popular sources are the SuperTracker Lesson Plans for High School Students. And in these lesson plans, students learn how to build a healthy diet using MyPlate in SuperTracker. It includes a variety of topics such as healthy snacking, personal dietary recommendations, how to evaluate food selection, how to build a healthy meal, physical activity, calorie balance, and with every lesson plan there's learning objectives, detailed instructions, and then an accompanying handout. So we hope that for educators, it's really something that they can take and use. Now, because these are for high school students, they're really applicable to adults as well. At the high school level, we're already talking about most of the same concepts that adults really need to do too, so there's no reason that they can't be used in other settings outside of the school as well.

We also have a SuperTracker wellness toolkit and this was designed for worksite wellness programs. It's an eight-week program for coordinators to support employee health and wellness. It includes weekly activities that can be done, motivational messages, health and wellness tips, principle materials, and more. So the idea here was really giving one resource that had everything somebody would need to run a program at their worksite, place, or really any setting where you have other adults working together. You can get to this through the Help Menu on the User Guide page in SuperTracker, and we know that educators and others in the community are really important roles models. So, SuperTracker can be a great tool to help you learn how to eat a healthy diet, as well as on healthful eating behaviors, because it really does translate over into people that you might be working with.

The other thing I wanted to point out for SuperTracker resources is a really important collection of site tour videos. This is a library of YouTube videos that demonstrates how to use SuperTracker, because there are a lot of sort of advanced features of SuperTracker that we want people to know how to use and I think the easiest way for them to learn is to watch the video. Because you can read a user guide but it's not quite the same as having somebody show you how to do it. So we have a really nice library

of videos. Right now we have 19 videos and we're adding a couple more in the next few weeks. This is based on feedback that we get from our users. If we know we received the same question via email ten times in a week, we know we need a video for that feature, because that means that we didn't make it quite easy enough and there needs to be some help out there for people. So we do really listen to our users and try to provide them with the resources that they need. And again, you can get to this through our Help Menu as well.

So now we spent a lot of time talking about SuperTracker and that's one of our most popular tools, but as we've mentioned at the beginning of the call, not everybody has an Internet connection at their home. Maybe they're using a mobile device and that's not necessarily something that they want to be using for extensive tracking, and maybe SuperTracker isn't quite what they need. So we do have a lot of other resources and I'm going to just share a few of them with you today, and these are all available on the Choose MyPlate website. You can go to myplate.gov to get there and I'll also share some more specific links as we talk about each resource.

So, the first resource I wanted to let you know about was the MyPlate Daily Checklist and this is a quick calculator to get your daily food plan based on your age, sex, height, and weight, and physical activity level. So, you can think of this as the very lite version of SuperTracker. You can still get personalized recommendations for how much you need to be eating within each food group, but it's not nearly as time intensive to set up your profile and that sort of thing. And so you would enter your age, your sex, whether or not you're pregnant or breastfeeding. For women, we do include those options, your weight, your height, and your physical activity level. And then on the next slide you'll see what the result would be.

So based on what you enter, your checklist would show you what and how much to eat from each food group within your calorie allowance. So, on the first page of the checklist, it actually tells you the amounts you need from each food group. It provides tips on how to make healthy choices within those food groups and also how to limit your intake of added sugar, saturated fat, and sodium. And on the second page, it's an actual checklist. So you can start to keep track of what you're eating it and how it matches up with your goal, and as an educator or community professional, anybody who's working with someone. If you don't necessarily want to collect any kind of information about your participants and their age, and that sort of thing, you can always print out the default plan for everybody and that's two thousand calories. That's sort of the middle of the line what we tell most people if we don't have any other information about them. And you can always use that as a guiding checklist to give them.

Another nice resource we have that we developed a couple years ago was my MyPlate, MyWins for Families because families always need more tips on how to work together for healthy eating in an active lifestyle. So this toolkit offers fun, practical, tips and tools for families including some videos from real families which are really nice to watch, recipes, activities for kids and more. So this is just -- what you're looking at is just one sample of an activity. We have some other ones on there as well and you can get to everything from the URL that's given at the bottom of this slide. So we have videos that you can watch right there, either on mobile device or on the website and some other recipes and activities that you can download.

Next, I'll talk about our MyPlate Tip Sheets. This is one of our most popular resources because these are very quick guides that can be printed out or viewed online or on a mobile device to just give you really simple ways to meet your healthy eating goals. We have over 50 of them that cover a variety of healthy eating topics and they are intended to give solutions for everyday life. So, we know that your overall goal may be to lose weight, but the only way you'll get there is by making small changes in your everyday life. So that's really what these tip sheets focus on. The ones you're looking at right now on this slide are some of our newer ones. We have a meal planning one, enjoying local foods, active lifestyle, and reach your nutrition goals. And we also have a lot of other topics. These are just our most current ones. So, these are in PDF format, which means that you can print them, but you can also just pull them up on a mobile device and they just display pretty nicely there as well.

And the last resource I'm going to talk about is one of our newer sort of media campaigns, and this is the Make Small Changes campaign. As I was saying with the tip sheets, we know that your overall goal may be to eat healthier, but you have to start with small changes that you make in your everyday life to get there. And that's sort of the focus of this campaign. We have animated videos about small healthy changes to make to your typical meals, and we also have tip sheets to go along with those videos. So you could read tips to support healthy eating in common settings like buffets, potlucks, coffee shops, different places where you have to kind of make a choice about what you're going to eat and helping people know what choice to make to help them meet their goals.

And with the last slide, I just want to thank you very much for the opportunity. I'm sorry that my connection wasn't working, but hopefully we worked around it okay. And I really appreciate you taking the time to learn about our MyPlate resources and SuperTracker, and I hope that you take away with you something that you can use in your practice.