

Activity: Food/Cooking Goal: Sensory Populations: All

TH Activity Plan – Herb Spread on Bagels

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Photo by Miyoko's Creamery



ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Participants will make herb spread & eat it on bagels.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

Cognitive/Intellectual: Expand nutritional knowledge

Physical: Maintain hand skills using knife & fork, mix & spread ingredients & handle food

Psychological/Emotional: Learn strategies addressing impulsivity; use cues to address memory challenges

Sensory: Practice hand eye coordination & proprioception

Social: Practice socially appropriate dress, behavior & manners at special event

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Prep:** Leader sets out ingredients on the tables so that the teams of two have utensils & bowls. Gather the herbs to be used: orange mint, thyme, lavender, chives, lemon verbena, lemon thyme, rosemary, oregano, or a combination of these. Set cream cheese out several hours ahead so it is at room temperature & soft to work with.
2. Facilitator begins session by organizing participants to work in pairs sitting at workstations & putting on gloves.
3. Discuss & demonstrate how to use herbs, stripping off the leaves from stems & cutting them into very small pieces with scissors or knives.
4. Measure & mix $\frac{1}{4}$ cup herbs with 8 oz cream cheese or margarine. Use a single flavor of herb or mixtures.
5. Serve the bagels fresh or toasted. The facilitator will need to toast the bagels.
6. Participants spread the mixture onto their bagels. Sampling the various flavors of herb spread will provide sensory experiences, opportunities to discuss sense of taste, preferences, nutritional benefits of bread, herbs & spread.

APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: This TH activity is appropriate for most populations unless individuals have swallowing, allergy, medication contraindications. Leader can adapt activity to suit physical abilities of participants. Some participants may be able to cut, mix, toast, spread & clean up.

Materials

2 lbs of cream cheese at room temperature OR 2 lbs of soft spread margarine
2 dozen mini-bagels (pre-sliced)
12 - 4" sprigs of different fresh herbs from the garden (enough to make $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of finely chopped leaves)
safety scissors, forks
6 medium mixing bowls
small bowls to hold the chopped herbs
measuring cup(s)
paper plates & plastic knives
toaster
disposable gloves, wipes

People living with dementia – Use cues to address memory issues, practicing typical gestures & verbal prompts like wipe your mouth, sit down & thank-you. Participating in activities of daily living like preparing & eating snacks that they may not be doing in memory care facility can be a fun sensory social activity while maintaining a sense of their old selves.

Children – All ages of children & youth can benefit from practicing social skills & patience. Though this may not be a treatment goal for some, others may work towards delaying gratification (eating) or doing less impulsive behavior. Eating snacks may also address children who are hungry – nearly 11 million kids face food insecurity (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2023).

People with developmental delays- Practicing socially appropriate behavior during a special breakfast with family & friends can be an important life skill for work & personal time. Learning strategies for delaying gratification (eating bagel) & managing impulsivity are skills that can benefit from reinforcement in different settings like the TH session.

Food insecure – Exploring nutritionally dense snacks that can be low cost & do not require cooking can be relevant to people who are food insecure, unhoused or facing adversity. Including fruits & vegetables in this session would provide healthy food, ideas & sensitivity for participants.

Physical disabilities – A focus on hand skills mixing, cutting & spreading butter/herbal spread, using knife & fork, along with hand eye coordination & proprioception (knowing where body parts (hands) are without looking) may be appropriate for a variety of physical disabilities including people with stroke, cerebral palsy, carpal tunnel, Dupuytren’s disease, flexor tendon injuries & arthritis.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: Check before session for individuals who have swallowing, allergy or contraindications with medication to all of the ingredients, not just herbs. Keep hot toaster & knives out of reach of people living with dementia or others who might be tempted to grab & misuse them. Protocols for safe handling of food should be reviewed & in place for session.

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: This food-focused session makes a good Intergenerational or special event activity. Role reversal may suit some populations, demonstrating their sense of independence, responsibility & appropriate behavior & attire.

Herbal Butter

16 oz butter
1 T dried chives
1 T dried basil
1 T dried parsley
1 T dried tarragon
1 T dried rosemary
1 T dried marjoram
1 t garlic powder
½ t lemon juice
Mix thoroughly & store in airtight container.

Pineapple Sage Cream Cheese Spread

1-2 T fresh pineapple sage leaves chopped
16 oz room temp cream cheese
8 oz can crushed pineapple in juice
4 Tbs. sifted confectioners’ sugar
1 t lemon juice
Combine all ingredients well, then refrigerate (or not)

REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2023). Nearly 11 million kids face food insecurity as statistic dips to 20-year low. <https://www.aecf.org/blog/nearly-11-million-kids-face-food-insecurity-as-statistic-dips-to-20-year-low#:~:text=Casey%20Foundation's%20KIDS%20COUNT%2%AE,million%20children%20across%20the%20country.>

The British Society for Surgery of the Hand. (2023). Hand disorders. https://www.bssh.ac.uk/patients/conditions/hand_disorders

Edits were made for THAD purposes in 2023.

TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2023.