

## Module 11 Lesson 5

### Transcript

Today, we are talking food waste. I think we all fall somewhere on the spectrum of wasting food. Honestly, it can be hard to not waste any food. Maybe there were a few of us that don't waste any food, but most of us fall somewhere along the spectrum. We've all been in a situation of tossing leftovers, throwing out the head of lettuce we forgot about in our refrigerator drawer, or watching the tomato we bought on the counter rot. If you haven't, well, I can guarantee your clients have.

Some people are like, "Eh, too bad I never got to eat that tomato." Some people feel so guilty, they'll say, "Oh, I wish I'd eaten that tomato. I wasted money. I'm out of the dollar I spent on it. I feel so bad for the environment." Still, others are affected by the awareness that people are hungry out there, and we're throwing out food. And more and more environmental reasons are important in our work to not waste food.

My goal today is to get you thinking about ways to reduce food waste, and for you to pass these tips along to your clients. We'll be discussing statistics related to food waste and its impact on our environment, economy, and health. And tips for reducing food waste that you can share with your clients. I know everyone taking this course is passionate about health and nutrition. And maybe you're already super conscious about not wasting food.

So I want to start out by saying this. I tell all of my clients that where ever you stand on the issue of food waste, it's really important that you do your part, whether your part is big or little, you can still do your part. Your personal incentive to reduce food waste is fueled by your upbringing, usually, your culture, environment, and community. All of those factors are different for each of us of course, but we all need to change the culture of food waste in our world, and you can make a big difference.

I'm going to start with some statistics to deepen your commitment to doing your part. I love statistics and you know that by now. They're powerful. So let's see what resonates with you here. 30% to 40% of the food supply in the UW is wasted. We're talking 133 billion pounds and \$161 billion. That's 219 pounds per person in 2010, which is our most recent numbers we have. And by the way, those numbers are still climbing.

Wholesome food that could be sent to families is sent to the landfill because the produce doesn't meet standards of appearance. Appearance! Losses are measured in land, water, labor, processing, inputs, transportation, preparation, storage, packaging, and disposing of uneaten food.

Fruits and veggies have the highest waste of any food. If we rescued 15% of the food we throw away each year, we'd be able to feed, get this, 25 million Americans, which is roughly 60% of the food insecure people in our country.

I think that statistic alone is just so incredibly powerful and motivating to people to help do their part. We have enough food to end food insecurity. We choose not to. How crazy is that? Supermarkets lose \$15 billion a year in losses annually just in fruit and vegetable losses. Families throw out an estimated 25% of the food and beverages they buy, which in monetary terms amounts to \$1,300 to \$2,200 a year. 43%, sorry, I got to keep going with these stats, but 43% of all of our food lost is from households.

Sadly, this food loss is contributing to more than 7% of global emissions, and more than 20% of greenhouse gases come from agricultural activities. Water, soil, and fertilizer impacts are also great and most of the material filling our landfills is organic matter such as food waste. And that material gets buried in the dump. It decomposes anaerobically and releases methane, a greenhouse gas 25 times more harmful than carbon dioxide.

Take a minute and think right now about what you can do to waste less food. You can even pause the video if you want. I'm going to give you a second to just think about where you might be wasting food and where you can maybe waste less food, and then I'll give you some tips. Okay. So did you think a little bit? Did you write anything down, perhaps? Have anything in your mind that you're thinking about that you can make a change with right now?

Okay, well now I'm going to give you some tips for you and for your clients. So let's go. Write a super specific shopping list as much as possible and stick to it. Impulse buys usually go unused. Be careful of the lure of buying in bulk. If you can't eat the bucket of grapes, don't buy them just because they're a deal. Buy ugly and imperfect produce. They're just as delicious and nutritious, and may get passed by because they appear imperfect. They're not imperfect. They're meant for you to buy. Store foods like they are found at the market. Spinach gets refrigerated. Potatoes go on the counter. Storing foods properly increase their shelf lives.

Don't over-pack your refrigerator so that it's hard to see what you have. When you finally find something that you wanted to eat, it may be too late. Keep your refrigerator well-organized so you don't hide the great things that you bought. Ask for smaller portions and take leftovers home always. Share food and go for appetizer portions. Make sure your fridge is set to 40 degrees, and your freezer at 0 to store food safely. Don't be afraid to toss your food into the freezer before it goes bad if you think you're not going to get to it.

Frozen foods preserve beautifully and can be eaten when you're ready for them. Make a bin or space in your refrigerator for that need to be eaten in the next two days so you know that's where you need to go when you're hungry. If something is on the about to go bad list, make a smoothie. It always ends up tasting pretty good in a smoothie. There is really no truth by the way, behind the use by, or sell by, and best before dating. They're unregulated labels that don't always reflect if a food is safe to eat. Unless you're working with an immunocompromised client, a baby, or a high risk person. Sticking to those dates is not gospel. Test the foods by smell, sight, texture before throwing them out blindly.

Also, compost. Save those scraps of skin from your oranges and cores for your apples and keep them out of landfills. You'd be surprised how easy even urban composting is. And finally, practice the five Rs. Refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle, and reverse. I hope everyone is feeling empowered to make some changes to their own habits and to pass these tips along to their clients too.

So here's a recap of what we covered. 30% to 40% of the food in the US is wasted, which contributes to climate change, global hunger and economic losses. You and your clients can reduce your personal food waste by writing shopping lists, not always buying in bulk, buying imperfect produce, storing food properly, eating leftovers, being aware of expiration dates and freshness dates, and maybe not paying as close attention to them, composting, and then also practicing the five Rs. I will see you in the next lesson.