

Module 11 Lesson 1

Transcript

By now, you all know that a healthful environment is a fundamental part of living a nutritious life. We're going to focus on the live consciously pillar here and talk about the way food is grown, processed, packaged, delivered, and ultimately consumed by peeps like you and me and everyone we all work with. Many of the things we'll talk about can't be changed overnight, we know that, but rather than get you overwhelmed and then have you bring that feeling to your clients, I want you to know this. My point here in this lesson is to get you thinking so that you can ultimately help your clients make the most healthful decisions in every situation they're in. Acknowledging that in today's world, it's not always going to be perfect and you don't have to be perfect by any means. In today's lesson, we're going to get into the fancy definition of carbon footprint.

Explore how our carbon footprint is linked to our health. Talk about the connection between climate change and health. Discuss how carbon footprint impacts the environment and personal health and explore steps our clients can take to reduce their carbon footprint and of course we can do these ourselves, too. Hopefully we're doing many of them. So let's get to it. Research is really strong that obesity is linked to climate change. Did you know that? Yep, it is true. It's crazy right when you think about it? But evidence suggests that current food production, transport, land use and urban design negatively impact both climate change and obesity outcomes. It may be causal, but of course we need to consider it that the behaviors and food choices of obese individuals use more fossil fuels from transportation and food production. Here's a fun fact: plant based diets are linked to lower rates of obesity.

Research also connects climate change and diabetes. Evidence suggests that a climate increase of as little as 1% can increase risks for diabetes by 0.2%. You can bet your donuts that when that research is stronger, I'll be doing a whole other lesson on it. It's super fascinating stuff. It can feel like we're helpless and hopeless to figure out answers and find solutions, but that's not the nutritious life way. Here in our TNS community, we're always thinking about doing our part without hopefully becoming overwhelmed and hopeless. We want to be positive and make the change as we can. So I wanted to focus this lesson on carbon footprint.

Your carbon footprint is the total greenhouse gas, GHG, emissions caused directly and indirectly by an individual organization, event or product. So basically it reflects how much greenhouse gases you, your family, your car, and pretty much all the things in your life give off and reflects how much fossil fuels you're consuming.

These gases like methane and nitrous oxide contribute to global warming. What you eat, how you travel, where your clothing comes from, literally all of it. It's all part of your carbon footprint. The goal is to make as small a footprint as possible. So here's what we can try to do ourselves and encourage our clients to do to reduce their carbon footprint. The goal isn't perfection and I'm not here to make you feel terrible if you use a plastic bag from time to time from the supermarket. Although take this moment to of course invest in a reusable grocery bag if you haven't already done so.

Just like our diets, where we're trying to do a little bit better all the time and we don't want to feel like failures if we aren't perfect. Definitely not. That is not the goal. I'm just encouraging you to think about it when you can improve upon what you're doing. Make a few small behavior changes and be consistent with them just like you're trying to be with your food and exercise and build from there.

So here you go. I know you know the three Rs, reduce, reuse, and recycle. Let's add two more and make it the five Rs. Refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle, and reverse. Here's what I mean. What if before we reduce, we refuse. Don't take the bags and packaging you don't need. Say no thank you to the freebies and single use things that will just end up in a landfill. And what about that last R I'm adding? Reverse. And by that I mean composting, we reverse some of the damage by composting and creating more organic soil with our food and waste and reduce our carbon footprints by not filling landfills with organic matter. Could just start a little compost pile in your community at home or drop off your organic waste at a collection site? You can even buy little composters on Amazon. There are little things you can do to get started.

Next, you can use your feet or bike as much as possible, and of course that's just good for us as well in our health. Public transportation is next best and also what about carpooling? It's more fun to travel with people anyway. Cut back on driving and flying when possible, of course. Less exhaust means cleaner air. You should also reduce your water usage with simple steps like turning the water off when you brush your teeth and taking shorter showers. I remember when I was brushing my teeth when my daughter was I think four years old and she yelled at me that the water was on. They were teaching that in school, which I was very happy to hear. Keep the water you do use clean with organic soap products that aren't full of chemicals and toxins. That's another thing you can do. You also can eat locally and seasonally as we discuss in another lesson.

You can also eat less meat. You don't have to give it up all together, but just reduce it some. Plant-based is much less carbon intensive than a meat based diet. You really don't need more reasons to eat your greens. We know that, so just load up on your greens as much as possible for a

plethora of reasons, not just your carbon footprint. Cut down on electricity by turning off or unplugging what you're not using. It does make a difference. Use clean energy in your home and make that choice as much as possible. You can do this by using energy efficient heating and cooling units and energy conserving appliances. Buy led light bulbs, insulate, weatherproof, put a green roof on top of your home or shed. Also, when you're traveling, you can choose green hotels. You also can support climate action organizations. You can vote for politicians who stand for green values.

There are so many things you can do to do your part. And again, you don't have to do all of them and you don't have to be overwhelmed. Just try to get involved here and try to get your clients involved as well. And finally, you can also calculate your own carbon footprint and see what you can do personally to make steps in a more sustainable direction. You can check out the handout with this lesson and use the online calculator we included to do just that. It can also be a little fun. Try it out with your clients if you want.

This lesson really sets the tone for the lessons coming up. So let's take a moment and review the big takeaways here. Your carbon footprint is the total greenhouse gas emissions caused directly and indirectly by an individual and organization, event or product. The goal is to make as small a footprint as possible and you can do this.

You can make a difference and you can make a difference in your clients' lives too. And the world by refusing, reducing, reusing, and recycling and reversing through composting. Using public transportation or walking or biking, eating locally and seasonally and more plants, and making sustainable decisions such as supporting climate change activists and politicians. I'll reiterate it again. Do the best you can and encourage your clients to do the same. Don't be overwhelmed. You don't have to be perfect here, but let's get moving and let's all together try to make a difference. I'll see you in the next lesson.