brighterbites®

BRIGHTER BITES FOOD IS MEDICINE PROGRAM

Implementation Toolkit

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKIT

Developed by: Brighter Bites & Center for Healthy Communities, UTHealth Houston School of Public Health

Contents

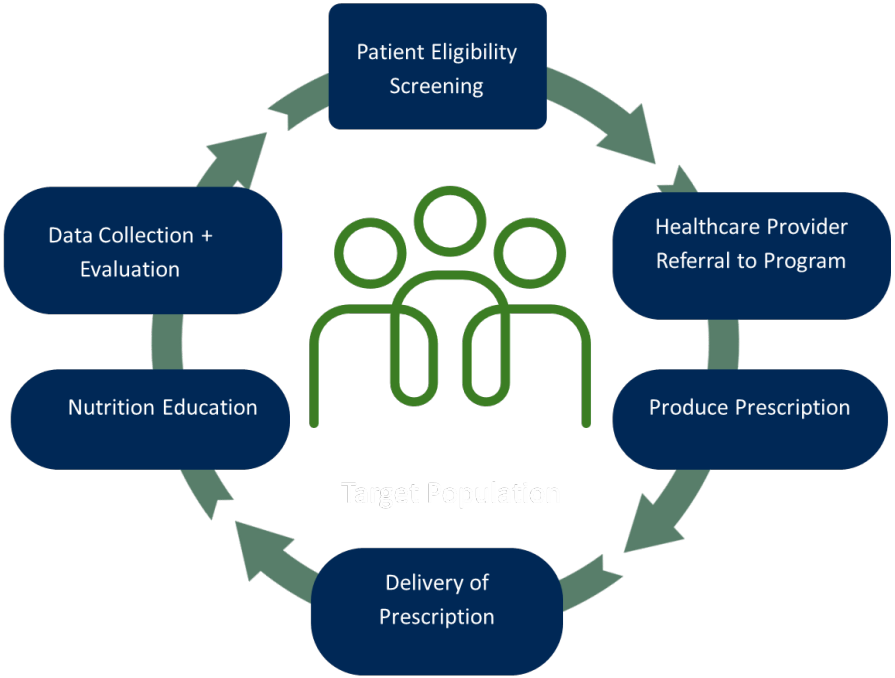
FOOD IS MEDICINE

Brighter Bites

WHAT IS FOOD IS MEDICINE?

ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit serves as a helpful guide for anyone interested in partnering with Brighter Bites to implement Food Is Medicine (FIM) programs in their communities. It offers a vital framework and clear steps for those considering developing such programs in their health systems. The successful integration of FIM programs requires successful partnerships between academic institutions, healthcare organizations, community entities, and food retailers. Below we provide details on what is needed and recommendations to ensure successful integration of such programs.



Flow of a FIM Program

The Brighter Bites mission is to create COMMUNITIES OF HEALTH through FRESH FOOD.

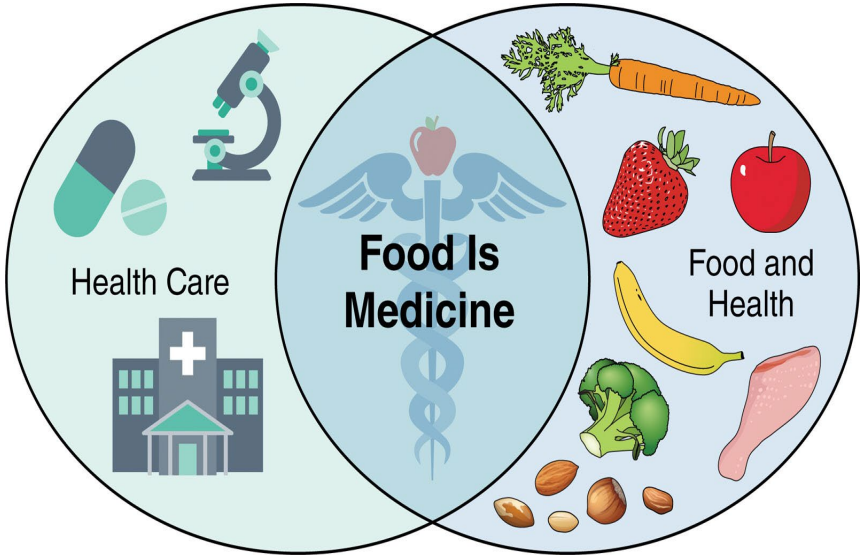
Brighter Bites is a national nonprofit that delivers fruits and vegetables directly into families' hands. We teach families how to use the produce and watch their behavior change into healthier habits.

FOOD IS MEDICINE

Food Is Medicine (FIM) is the provision of healthy food to prevent, manage, or treat specific health conditions in a way that is integrated with your doctor's clinic and/or hospital system.

FIM offer a targeted strategy to increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables and improve long-term health.

Supported by a ***multidisciplinary team of registered dietitians, produce procurement specialists, and health promotion experts, Brighter Bites provides delivers high-quality, family-centered healthy food provision plus nutrition education program.***



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BACKGROUND - BRIGHTER BITES

Why Brighter Bites?

PROVEN SUCCESS

In our 11 current markets, we've delivered thousands of pounds of produce to patients, improving their well-being and reducing healthcare costs.

COMMUNITY-CENTRIC

We work closely with local communities to ensure our programs meet their unique needs.

SCALABLE MODEL

Our approach is ready for expansion, and with your support, we can reach even more families in need.

THE POWER OF PRODUCE RX: Our Produce Rx program bridges the gap between healthcare and nutrition. Doctors prescribe fresh fruits and vegetables to patients in need, promoting healthier diets and preventing chronic illnesses.

WHAT WE DO: OUR FIM FORMULA

Developed by dietitians and behavioral scientists

A Prescription for a Healthier Future: Unlocking Health Through Fresh Produce

PRODUCE PROVISION + NUTRITION EDUCATION

FOOD IS MEDICINE

Brighter Bites

HOW WE DO IT

BRIGHTER BITES FIM PROGRAM COMPONENTS & APPROACH

1. Human-centered design
2. Food Provision
3. Food Delivery
4. Nutrition Education and Engagement
5. Process Evaluation - KPIs

HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN APPROACH

- Brighter Bites uses a human-centered design approach by placing the needs, preferences, cultures, and lived experiences of families at the center of program development, implementation, and continuous improvement. ‘
- Rather than creating nutrition interventions for communities and health systems, Brighter Bites works with families and local partners to co-design solutions that are practical, culturally relevant, and responsive to community priorities and health needs.
- Brighter Bites is grounded in behavior science theory that

Our Two Proven FIM Strategies:

Fresh Food Home Delivery | Fresh Produce Vouchers

FRESH FOOD HOME DELIVERY

- Flexible healthy food box options:
  - Fresh produce only
  - OR
  - Fresh produce plus additional nutritious food items (lean protein, whole grains, dairy, healthy fats) based on program goals and participant needs.

- Fee-for-service structure that allows programs to tailor procurement, sourcing, and distribution approaches to meet operational and community needs.
- Opportunities for local and regional food sourcing, dependent on market availability and program location.

CONVENIENT HOME DELIVERY OF PRODUCE BOXES

Eligibility	Participants must live within a **15-mile radius** of a Brighter Bites school or designated distribution site.
Assigning Distribution Sites	Participants are assigned to the closest available **Brighter Bites school** or **distribution site** based on schedule and location. Deliveries are aligned with distribution times.
Brighter Bites Program Coordinators	- Schedule deliveries and track assignments. - Communicate schedule changes or cancellations.
Brighter Bites Research Team	- Update participant lists weekly. - Send surveys and nutrition education materials via text.
Participant Communication	Informational flyers are included in produce bags with **program details, schedules, and contact information**.

CLIENT CHOICE – FRESH PRODUCE VOUCHER PROGRAM

- Easy-to-use voucher cards mailed home
- $25 for fresh produce purchasing at retail

(e.g. Walmart, Kroger, Randall's, Dollar General Etc).

- 16 reloads, every 2 weeks (32 weeks)
- Amount and duration may vary based on health promotion strategy

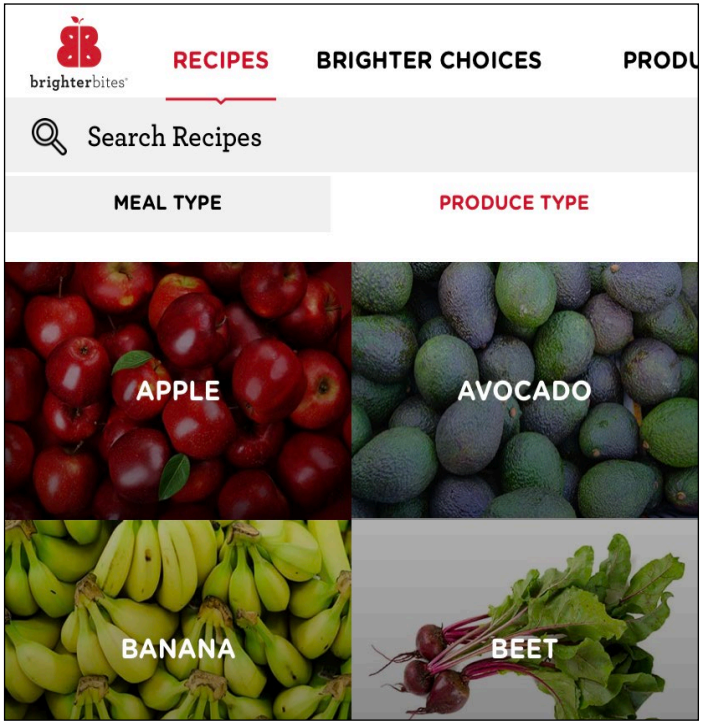
NUTRITION EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT

Brighter Bites provides **evidence-based, bilingual (English & Spanish) nutrition education** to support participants in making healthier food choices. This includes:

- **Brighter Bites app available freely on Android and I-phone on the app store.**
- **Text Messaging Campaigns** that deliver regular nutrition tips and healthy eating resources, aligned with produce delivery schedules. Messages are customized based on participants.
- **Educational Materials** such as **recipes, cooking tips, and grocery shopping guides**, designed to be practical and culturally relevant. These materials reinforce key nutrition principles and encourage healthier eating habits.
- Brighter Bites also offers **in-person or virtual culinary classes, and has culinary videos available online.**

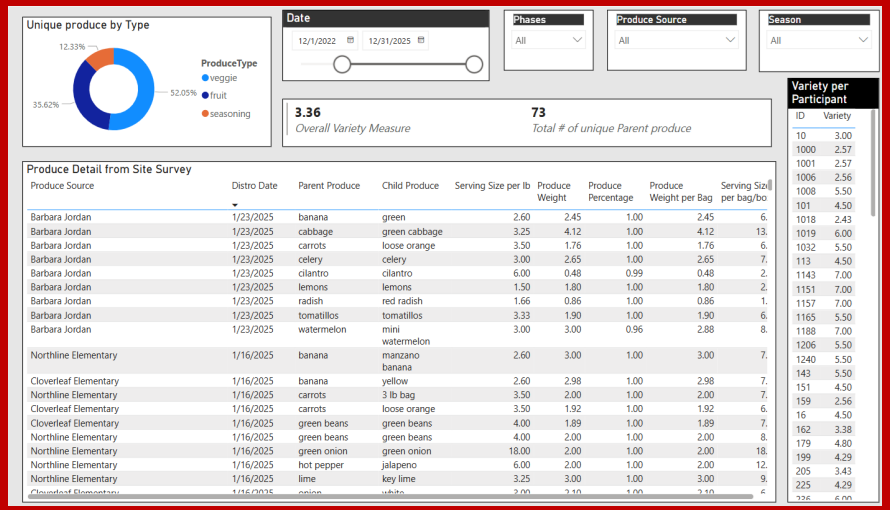
By integrating produce delivery with structured nutrition education, Brighter Bites ensures participants have both access to fresh food and the knowledge to make the most of it.

See www.brighterbites.org for all our nutrition education materials.



BRIGHTER BITES IS DATA DRIVEN
REAL-TIME MONITORING OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Database Management: Brighter Bites tracks all process indicators in real-time on a PowerBi dashboard, available readily to health system partners.



WHAT IS THE ROLE OF HEALTH SYSTEMS?

1. Planning for a successful FIM partnership:
    a. Structure and Personnel
    b. Legal Readiness
    c. Process/workflow mapping
    d. Training
2. Enrollment & Prescribing
    a. Strategies
    b. Follow-up

HEALTH SYSTEM PLANNING - STRUCTURE AND PERSONNEL

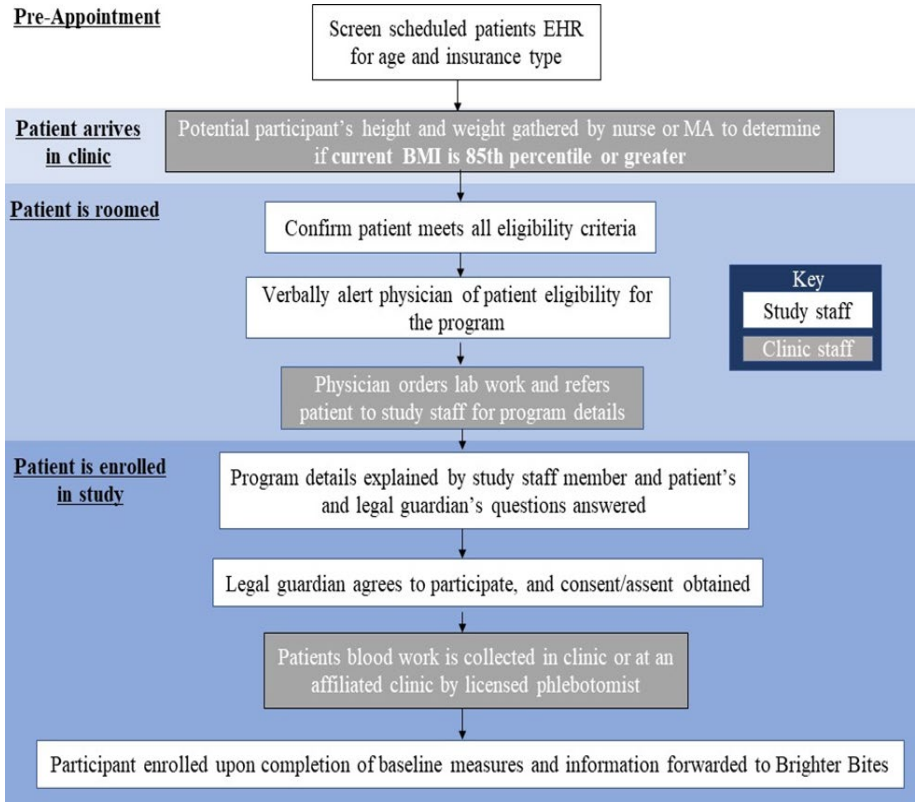
Understanding how to the health system is organized and operates is important to consider before implementation. Questions to consider in planning phase:

1. What is the patient volume?
2. What is the eligibility criteria to enroll in the program?
3. Who is going to enroll the patients into the program?
4. Who is prescribing the program?
5. How are patients going to be screened?
6. What is the overall flow of the clinic?
7. When is the best time to approach the patient regarding the program?
8. What is the health record system? How can it be used to facilitate recruiting?
9. How are the enrolled patients being tracked?
10. Is there are mechanism set up to allow for follow-up with patients?
11. How is Brighter Bites going to receive the information of enrolled patients?

PLANNING - PROCESS/WORKFLOW MAPPING

Health systems must identify key personnel that are going to be involved in each stage AND establish best practices for recruitment and follow up with patients

Example of a workflow within a clinic setting



HEALTH SYSTEM PLANNING - LEGAL READINESS

Clarify Partnership Structure

- Define roles across academic, healthcare, and community-based partners
- Identify where formal agreements are required (MOUs, contracts, DUAs)

Review Regulatory & Compliance Requirements

- HIPAA-compliant data sharing
- Consent processes for participants
- Liability and risk management considerations

Define Documentation Needs

- Align workflows with existing EHR documentation and reporting structures

Plan for Ongoing Review and Adaptations

- Annual review of contracts, DUAs, and policies
- Updates based on program evolution, regulatory changes, or new partners

HEALTH SYSTEM PLANNING - TRAINING STAFF

For streamlined integration within the health system, staff directly involved in the produce prescription process will need to trained in (1) discussing produce prescriptions with patients using standardized language and (2) identifying eligible patients.

Training must also be conducted with staff that are not directly involved, such as front desk personnel, nurses, physicians, etc. BB staff or partners can conduct lunch and learns, online brief trainings, or in person walkthroughs with staff to ensure success of the program.

Training materials are available and adaptable.

HEALTH SYSTEM ENROLLING & PRESCRIBING - STRATEGIES

Health systems will spend most of their efforts on identifying and enrolling patients.

Health systems might have to adapt their strategies after enrollment has started.

Retrospective enrollment	This method involves using an electronic medical record (EMR). Someone will review the upcoming appointments to find out who meets the requirements for the program. Then, they'll make calls before the patient's clinic visit.
Enroll on the Day of the Clinic Visit	When patients check in at the clinic, they'll be screened to see if they meet the program's eligibility criteria based on factors like age, insurance type, and BMI. If they qualify, they'll be introduced to the program.
Retroactive Enrollment	After patients have already visited the clinic and left, they'll receive a follow-up call to learn about the produce prescription program if they meet the eligibility requirements. .

Different strategies for enrollment

ENROLLING & PRESCRIBING - FOLLOW UP

Maintaining communication with the participants is key to ensure:

1. Retention within the program
2. Utilization of the program
3. Troubleshooting concerns

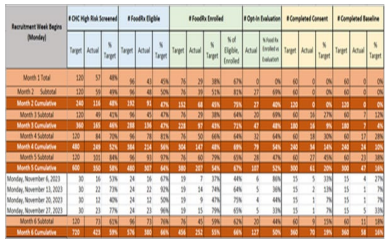
A protocol detailing who is responsible for maintaining the communication, how often the communication should occur, and how to handle any concerns should be established prior to the start of the program. It is also recommended to develop a standardized script to ensure consistent communication is occurring.

DATA AND EVALUATION

Part of the planning of the produce prescription program also involves determining what data to collect and how to evaluate the effectiveness and feasibility of the program.

Brighter Bites has an ongoing partnership with Center for Healthy Communities at UTHealth Houston School of Public Health to evaluate FIM programs.

HOW DO WE PARTNER TOGETHER ON EVALUATION?

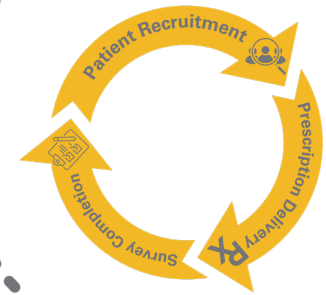


Weekly Meetings

Updates on recruitment & discussion of results

Continuous Process Evaluation

Information sharing across the project

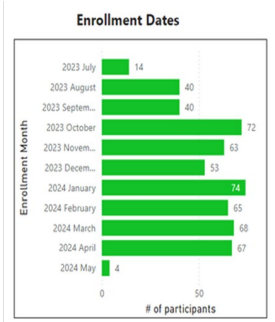


Data Quality Control

Reviewing survey responses

KPI Dashboard

Tracking indicators in real-time across the project partners



“I have really enjoyed program. It allowed us to introduce a lot of different recipes and ingredients that I normally wouldn’t be able to get if I had to just rely on my income... This is really helpful.”

-PARENT

“The program does a good job at providing something new and different each time you get your bag.”

-PARENT

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