

## Tips to Spark Discussions in IFT Connect ([www.ift.org/connect](http://www.ift.org/connect))

IFT Connect is a safe environment for members from all backgrounds and disciplines to share their input and opinions, ask questions, share interesting thought-provoking ideas and advancements related to the food science community. The goal for the IFT Connect Lead is to encourage all members, whether they are first year students, new professionals, experienced professionals or tenured faculty, to join in the discussions posted on IFT Connect.

### Here are some tips for creating a discussion on IFT Connect and getting others to join in:

The screenshot shows a discussion post titled "Considerations For Smartphone And Computer Apps Geared Towards Healthy Eating?". The post is by Elizabeth Pletsch, dated Nov 30, 2015. It includes a question about using smartphone and computer apps for healthy eating, and an attached file named "Livewell plate computer app".

**Annotations:**

- Headline:** "Considerations For Smartphone And Computer Apps Geared Towards Healthy Eating?" (Red box). Tip: "Draw the reader in! If it takes a lot of effort from the reader to interpret or understand the headline, it probably won't encourage them to click on it and read more."
- Topic:** "Considerations for smartphone and computer apps geared towards healthy eating?" (Red box). Tip: "Make the topic you are about to introduce relatable to division members. Start with something that would be a common ground for all readers, and then connect it in with the new piece of information you are about to share."
- Question:** "Do you think using smartphone and computer apps are the way to go? What are things that need to be considered if these are incorporated more into one's eating choices? Partnering up with doctors, nutritionists, medical associations?" (Red box). Tip: "Pose a question and invite the reader to share their opinions on the posted topic! Start the thinking for them and make it known that their input is wanted. Everyone has an opinion on something!"
- Attached File:** "Livewell plate computer app" (Red box). Tip: "Make it easy for the reader to look deeper into the topic you are discussing. Provide links, the original research articles, or the news pieces that are generated based on the original research article. Provide links and documents that would help any reader from any background understand and contribute to the discussion."

### ***What should I post?***

Anything related to IFT's mission and the division's focus! IFT Connect is a place to keep members up to date on current events and recent developments in the food industry or food research, as well as on opportunities and events within IFT. News articles that are generated in regards to a new research development are a great way to start – they provide a concise overview of the development, and then you can find the original piece to give readers the option of looking into the deeper details. Throughout the year, you may create posts for recruiting volunteers for divisions, informing members about upcoming IFT webinars, as well as events at the IFT Annual Meeting.

## How often should I post?

Aim for at least once per week. You want to keep the conversations fresh, but you also want to allow enough time for a discussion to develop on a posted topic.

## What if no one replies to a post?

That's okay! Keep posting! Discussions remain on IFT Connect, so readers can always go back and review what you posted. Be sure to continually post reminders about upcoming IFT events and webinars. Sometimes this information can get lost the first, second, or third times, so it's always good to send a reminder!

## After making a post:

**Re: Considerations for smartphone and computer apps geared towards healthy eating?** 1 Helpful " Quote This Post in a Reply  
Posted by . on Dec 1, 2015 9:29 am

I agree, with the younger age groups the apps are certainly the way to go, but the problem is not having an app to count calories, but one that gives guidance or recommendations. Education is probably the biggest factor in changing the American diet, and more specifically when you look at lower income households. These families tend to have less time and less education of nutrition. An app that could allow you to count calories and give suggestions on dietary alternatives that are healthier, or explain what about my choice is not so healthy with the facial expression chart used with children. Its simple and conveys a message that is straight to the point.

(?) Report

**Re: Considerations for smartphone and computer apps geared towards healthy eating?** 1 Helpful " Quote This Post in a Reply  
Posted by Ph.D, RD, FADA, CFS on Dec 3, 2015 10:39 am

Although I agree that a computer app could benefit millennials, lack of awareness of portion sizes compounds the challenge of healthy choices. I don't know, but if there were a way for an app to evaluate the size of a serving, it could increase understanding of the importance of balance.

(?) Report

**Re: Considerations for smartphone and computer apps geared towards healthy eating?** 1 Helpful " Quote This Post in a Reply  
Posted by Elizabeth Pletsch on Dec 3, 2015 3:38 pm

Great points! Providing general information, as well as educating towards better future food choices, to a very diverse population is important, yet challenging. Keeping track of one's health and food intake must be as convenient as possible or else, one may opt not keep track at all, especially for the older populations you all mentioned that may not be as familiar with newer technologies. There's one app being worked on at Purdue where individuals can simply take a photo of their meal before and after eating, and get back an estimate of their food intake and other nutritional information (i.e. calorie intake), based on that image. This link below leads to more information on it (<http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20120214006638/en/Smartphone-App-Health-Diet-Conscious-Track-Caloric>). Pretty neat things in the works!

Great! Readers were drawn in and shared their feedback on the topic. It doesn't stop there! Be sure to follow up with comments and facilitate the discussion further by commenting with more information or posing more questions to draw even more readers in!

*Other tips: Post a profile picture – this makes your posts more personal (and others might recognize you when they see you at IFT's annual event!)*