Before the Meeting

Each chapter has been provided with a complimentary laminated “Meeting Here” sign. Be sure to display it prominently at your meeting place to help visitors find you. Providing nametags and asking everyone to wear them each week as they arrive is another way for everyone to get acquainted.

Weigh-In

Every chapter meeting should include a weigh-in unless the scale is broken. That’s the gift of accountability TOPS® meetings provide.

Depending on the size of the chapter, a period of 15-45 minutes is reserved at the beginning of the meeting for weighing each member. Details of this process are found on page 45.

Welcoming Visitors

Warmly greet any new faces and ask them to introduce themselves. Let them know that one of the officers will be available after the meeting to answer any questions they have. Or, if no one will be available, trade emails or phone numbers. That way you can follow up later and the visitor can contact someone with questions, if any arise. Some chapters use a guest book so they can keep all visitor information together. You may:

1. Briefly have members and visitors introduce themselves by first name and share in one sentence why they joined (or want to join).

2. Some chapters use the Welcome Circle chapter program to make visitors or new members feel welcome. See appendix.

3. Have a New Member Coach, officer or member of the Welcome or Hospitality Committee sit with the visitor to explain what is happening during the meeting. (See position descriptions beginning on page 28.)

Roll Call

Roll call provides a chance for each member to say whether he/she is up, down or the same (turtle) for the week and to share challenges and successes if the individual member wishes. Depending on the size of your chapter, you may allow each person just a moment or allow the discussion to go more in depth. On occasion, you may want your roll call to take up the better part of your meeting since members learn a lot from each other’s struggles and successes.

Educational Program

Have members take turns presenting the program. TOPS® provides hundreds of chapter programs, contests, activities, ceremonies, articles and worksheets appropriate for chapter meetings. Experts review all programs for accuracy.

1. Programs and important reminders are grouped in the center of each TOPS News.

2. The New Leader Outline with 52 weeks of program ideas is in the Leaders Corner of www.tops.org. (See page 40.)
3. Members may find program ideas online in the Members Area under the Programs and Contests section of the website.

4. Thousands of health information sheets written and reviewed by physicians are available in the Medical Q&A (Krames Health Library) on the Members Area of www.tops.org.

5. See Chapter 5 for more online resources.

Note: TOPS® is not responsible for program content that chapters use from other sources. Be aware of copyright infringement.

Awards
Keep members motivated with contests, including best loser of the week, month or quarter. Present certificates and award items to celebrate success. (See page 61.)

Brief Business Meeting
This includes committee and officer reports, fundraising, event coordination (IRD, fall rally, workshop and open house), annual bylaws, etc. To save time, items can be:

1. Handled by the Executive Committee and brought to the chapter for discussion or vote.

2. Outlined in a handout shared at one meeting for discussion at a future meeting or distributed via email or mail so members have time to consider the subject in advance.

Closing
Ritual creates comfort, safety and a sense of belonging. As a chapter, find an uplifting, short and meaningful way to close meetings and carry you from one week to the next.

Accentuate the Positive
While encouragement and support are keystones of a TOPS meeting, these are not to be confused as acceptance of errant behavior. In order to provide a clear, positive message, try some of these tips:

Communicate Well
• Be the first to greet or say “hello.”
• Use eye contact and smile.
• Be a good listener.
• Express yourself clearly and succinctly.
• Balance the giving and receiving of information.
• Separate facts from feelings.
• Be enthusiastic about others.
• Focus on the positive—compliment sincerely.
• Use humor to reverse a negative situation.

Be an Inspiration
• Accept others just as they are.
• Have confidence in your own abilities.
• Share your successes and those of others.
• Accept and work with your limitations.
• Share inspirational messages.
• Keep meetings focused on healthy lifestyles.
• Involve others in chapter activities.
• Encourage members to succeed.