



THE Wellness JOURNEY

on the road to good health

November 2009

A MONTHLY ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER TO EDUCATE, INFORM AND MOTIVATE PARENTS, TEACHERS AND CAREGIVERS AND ENCOURAGE THEIR HEALTHY LIFESTYLES AS THEY REINFORCE THE INFORMATION YOUTH RECEIVE THROUGH WELLNESS JOURNEY PROGRAMMING AND ACTIVITIES.

Cooking with kids teaches healthy eating!

Cooking teaches kids about eating well.

Getting kids involved in cooking is a great way to teach and encourage healthy eating. Kids often enjoy helping in the kitchen, and working together on meal preparation is an opportunity to teach about nutrition. Menu planning and food preparation are great times to discuss smart food choices and healthy options. Take the time to discuss the different food groups and encourage your kids to experiment with foods they might not otherwise try. If they help prepare it, they are more likely to eat it!

Depending on their age and interest, kids can take on different roles in the kitchen, from choosing recipes, shopping for (or even growing) some of the ingredients, to preparing, taste-testing and rating each recipe.

Younger kids can watch what you're doing and help out with small tasks, like stirring something or getting out ingredients. Older kids can crack eggs or measure ingredients. Even teens might be lured into the kitchen if you tell them they can choose the dish and you'll help prepare it with them.

There are plenty of benefits to having kids help in the kitchen but the lessons in nutrition will last a lifetime!

To make the most of time with your kids in the kitchen, consider these tips:

Choose the Right Time

Have them help with a meal on a weekend or another time when you're not in a hurry. Make sure younger children are well-rested and not hungry.

Choose the Right Tasks

Make sure the meal plan isn't complicated; if it's simple and easy to follow, kids will enjoy it more. For younger kids, consider starting with simple dishes with fewer than five ingredients. A tossed salad or healthy muffin recipe are a good place to start. Or set up assembly lines where kids can choose their own ingredients for mini-pizzas, omelets or fruit salads.

TESSA'S HEALTH TIPS

While at work or home, stand up and stretch once every hour.

Learn to spot high fat items. Words like fried, sautéed, rich, buttery, creamy, au gratin, extra-crispy and breaded are tip-offs.

Play with your pets today. It is good exercise for both of you.

Throw away something in the kitchen that you know is unhealthy.

Interview immediate family and record their health problems. Pick the two problems that occur most in your family and find out what can be done to prevent or delay their onset.

Kids who can read can call out the ingredients from the recipe card while you put them out on the counter. A younger child can help pour ingredients into a bowl while an older child might measure out and add ingredients.

Relax

No one is neat in the kitchen so allow for some extra mess and try to be patient. Even if everything doesn't go perfectly, try to keep the mood light. Kids will gain these skills through practice — and feel great once they're mastered.

Be sure to compliment your kitchen helpers on a job well done. Offer them first taste of whatever you cooked together — and ask what you should make together next time.

Meals together lead to healthier families

Family mealtimes have big benefits. Studies show that shared family meals are more likely to be nutritious, and kids who eat regularly with their families are less likely to snack on unhealthy foods and more likely to eat fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

Teens who take part in regular family meals are less likely to smoke, drink alcohol, or use marijuana and other drugs, and are more likely to have healthier diets as adults, studies have shown.

Family meals also provide a valuable opportunity for parents and kids to connect.

Log on to learn more!

- <http://kidshealth.org/kid/recipes/index.html>
 - <http://www.bellybytes.com/recipes/cooking4kids.shtml>
 - <http://www.kidsacookin.ksu.edu/Welcome.aspx>
 - <http://www.healthyfridge.org/kidsrec.html>
 - <http://www.healthy-recipes-for-kids.com/>
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"Build-Your-Own" Recipes for Kids

Pita Pockets:

Put out whole wheat pita breads sliced in half, small pieces of sliced turkey breast or low fat cheese and vegetables such as lettuce, sliced tomatoes, sliced onions, sliced cucumbers and bean sprouts. Let the diners spice up their sandwiches with mustard, cranberry sauce or salsa.

Baked Potato:

Offer healthful toppings for baked potatoes such as grated part-skim Parmesan cheese, plain non-fat yogurt flavored with curry or dill, ratatouille, vegetables sauteed in water or a little oil, canned (without salt) or frozen peas and salsa.



GET MOVING THIS MONTH

Raking the last of the leaves is a great way to get exercise — then join your kids in jumping in them! Head for the park and enjoy the swings and jungle gym once more before winter. Play, dance, stretch — just keep moving!



PRODUCE PICKS

This month, check out the great variety of orange choices in the produce department or at farmers markets: pumpkins, sweet potatoes and oranges all add a bright spot of color to your menu. Other fall favorites are cranberries, acorn squash and pears.

Burritos:

Offer cooked ground turkey, cooked kidney or black beans (drained if using canned), hot sauce, black olives, cooked rice, torn-up lettuce, diced tomatoes and warmed flour tortillas.

Healthy Breakfast***Perfect Pumpkin Pancakes***

Combine in a large bowl:

2 cup flour

2 tablespoons brown sugar

1 tablespoon baking powder

1 1/4 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice

1 teaspoon salt

Combine in a medium bowl:

1 ¾ cup lowfat milk

½ cup canned pumpkin

1 large egg

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

Add wet ingredients to the flour mixture, stir just until moist. Batter may be lumpy.

Lightly coat a griddle or skillet with cooking spray and heat on medium. Cook on both sides until golden brown.

Makes 6 servings

MAKING FAMILY MEALS HAPPEN

It can be challenging to plan, prepare, and share family meals, then be relaxed enough to enjoy them.

Some steps to help schedule family meals and make them enjoyable.

Plan

Look ahead on the calendar and choose a time when everyone can be there.

Organize menus and shopping, even some food prep work, ahead of time. Even better, cook and freeze dinners on the weekends for a quick weekday dinner

Prepare

Include the kids in preparations. Setting the table, tossing the salad, pouring a beverage, folding the napkins, are all jobs even young children can help with.

Enjoy

Make your time at the table pleasant and a chance for everyone to talk about their day and enjoy being together as a family.

For more information on the Wellness Journey programming, topics or events, contact Tessa Yakle, Wellness Coordinator, at 319-385-6595 or by e-mail at yaklet@hchc.org.