Kids in the Kitchen during COVID-19

Due to COVID-19, many of our routines and structures have been turned upside down. The one thing that continues to be essential is that we still need to eat! By seeking ways to take the pressure off ourselves and our kids, we can create opportunities to connect with food and nurture healthy eating. If you’d like to explore bringing kids into the kitchen more right now, maybe there’s a tip here that could help.

Food planning
When planning meals, aim to include options that you enjoy eating as a family. Here are a few ideas:

- Pull out a cookbook or two and choose a few recipes together to make for the week.
- Choose a new or favourite ingredient to build a meal around, for example noodles, lentils, or cheese.
- Include foods that kids can serve or put together themselves like mini pizzas or make-your-own wraps.

Meal ideas
If you’re looking for recipe inspiration, check out Canada’s Food Guide or the BC community recipes on BetterTogetherBC. For example, here are a few 1-minute videos from the kitchen hacks contest: 40-cent microwave burritos, Time saving sheet pancakes, Faster than delivery pizza quesadilla. You can also submit your own recipe to Better Together, or even create your own cookbook!

Cooking
Kids in the kitchen may require plenty of patience at the start but also an opportunity to learn and have fun. Children are also more likely to eat and enjoy what they’ve helped to prepare! Let your kids do the “fun” jobs like mixing ingredients together, cracking eggs, or stirring the pot. Check out this guide for tips about cooking with kids. Whatever the skill level, there are ways to involve any age, ranging from toddlers to teens.

Cleaning
It could get messy, so consider helping with cleanup as part of the kids’ job. The only way to learn is to try. This is also a great opportunity to practice proper hand-hygiene. It can be surprising to see how young children and teenagers get excited when invited to help.

Want more tips about feeding kids during COVID-19?

- Check out these Three Tips for Feeding Kids During COVID-19.
- Refer to Top Five Questions about Food and Eating during COVID-19 for more information about food safety, meal planning, and using food for comfort.

Written and updated by Vancouver Coastal Health Child and Youth Public Health Dietitians, June 10, 2020