Kids in the Kitchen during 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 bringing kids into the kitchen more right now sounds like an opportunity you’d like to explore, maybe there’s a tip here that could help.

Kids cooking
It can be surprising to see how young children and teenagers can get excited when invited to help with food planning and cooking. If you’re not sure where to start, here are some ideas to get you going:

- Pull out a few cookbooks 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 or cheese.
- Include foods that kids can serve or put together themselves like different toppings for pizza or make-your-own wraps.
- Let your kids do the “fun” jobs like mixing ingredients together, cracking eggs or stirring the pot. It’s ok if they spill or get a bit messy. Give children jobs to help with cleanup. The only way to learn is to try.

It may take a little longer at the start but it’s a great way to leave more time to learn, laugh and have fun together. Kids are more likely to eat and enjoy what they’ve helped to prepare! Check out these 10 tips to get your kids in the kitchen or these ideas for getting your family inspired in the kitchen together. Whatever the skill level, there are ideas for any age, ranging from toddlers to teens. This is also a great opportunity to practice proper hand-hygiene.

Meal ideas
Food can be a chance to bring the family together as we’re physically distancing from others. Aim to include foods that you enjoy eating as a family. Looking for meal ideas? Check out Canada’s Food Guide or the BC community recipes on BetterTogetherBC. You can also submit your own recipe to the site, or even create your own cookbook! Want some cooking inspiration? Here are a few 1-minute videos from Better Together worth checking out: Time Saving Sheet Pan Pancakes, Five-minute Mug Cake, Faster than Delivery Pizza Quesadilla.

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 for more information about food safety, meal planning, and using food for comfort during COVID-19.
- If you have any specific questions about your child’s nutrition, can contact HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1 to speak to a registered dietitian or email a HealthLinkBC dietitian.

Written and updated by Vancouver Coastal Health Child and Youth Public Health Dietitians, May 21, 2020