

Kids in the Kitchen—Calcium as They Like It

Helping kids learn to cook gives them a head start on good nutrition and teaches a skill that will serve for a lifetime. Easy recipes with milk, yogurt and cheese are a great way to introduce kids to cooking. And growing bones need calcium-rich foods each day.

Recipe for Learning

Cooking with kids is not only fun, but it also offers opportunities for learning. Here are just a few reasons to teach kids to cook.

Promote good nutrition. Seeing what goes into a recipe helps kids learn to make better decisions about the food they eat.

Encourage adventurous eating. Fixing their own food can encourage fussy eaters to try new foods. Kids are more willing to taste



Berry Beary Banana Split

foods that they have helped to prepare.

Demonstrate kitchen and food safety. Use this opportunity to teach kids the importance of washing their hands and other safety precautions, such as never touching a hot pan or always cutting properly with a knife.

Bolster reading and speech skills, along with confidence. Kids can develop language skills as they learn to read a recipe, follow the instructions and discuss new foods and cooking techniques. They'll build their vocabulary with new words, such as knead, mince and sauté and build confidence with each culinary success.

Practice math skills. Kids can learn math skills through counting, measuring and following step-by-step directions.

“Cooking” At Any Age

Age	Cooking Tasks	Calcium-Bosting “Recipes”
3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash fruits and veggies. • Stir ingredients in bowl. • Tear lettuce. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sprinkle shredded cheese on a casserole or salad. • Stir small pieces of fruit into yogurt.
4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mash bananas with a fork or potato masher. • Open packages. • Peel oranges or hard-cooked eggs. • Knead bread. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use animal cookie cutters to make cheese slices into fun shapes. • Mix fresh herbs into plain yogurt. Use as a dip for fresh veggie strips.
5-6 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure ingredients. • Cut soft foods with a blunt knife. • Garnish food. • Set the table. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice pouring milk from a pitcher into glasses. For a flavor boost, squeeze in some chocolate syrup and stir. • Cut cheese slices into small squares with a blunt knife to make cheese and cracker mini sandwiches.
7-8 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help plan the meal. • Roll and shape cookies. • Beat ingredients with a whisk. • Find ingredients in a cabinet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make mini pudding tarts. Measure milk and follow instructions to make instant pudding mix. Spread pudding on graham crackers and top with a spoonful of fruit pie filling, such as cherry or strawberry.
9-12 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open cans. • Use a microwave oven with (adult supervision). • Prepare simple recipes with few ingredients. • Use an oven (with adult supervision). • Use a knife (with adult supervision). • Shred cheese and vegetables. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make fruit and cheese kabobs. Cut fruit into chunks and cheese into cubes. Skewer fruit and cheese on toothpicks. Spoon fruit yogurt into a bowl to use as a dip.

“Experiment” with science. The kitchen becomes a science lab as kids see how food changes during preparation and cooking. They can learn about hot and cold, floating and sinking, dissolving, rising, melting and freezing.

Ingredients for Success

Follow these pointers to make cooking with kids safe and fun.

- *Young cooks need constant supervision.* An adult should always help with using the stove, oven or microwave; handling hot pans or bowls; using electric appliances such as can openers, mixers and blenders; and cutting or slicing foods with knives.
- *Tell kids to wait until the dish is fully prepared before sampling.* Explain how this can help prevent the spread of germs that can cause illness.
- *Expect spills and messes.* Make cleaning up part of the cooking activity.

Always put safety first. Review some of these safety rules before you begin cooking:

- Point pot handles toward the back of the stove.
- Never put knives or other sharp objects into a sink full of water. Someone could reach in and get hurt.
- Keep electrical appliances away from water to avoid shocks. Never plug in or unplug electrical appliances with wet hands.
- Never add water to a pan that has hot oil in it. It could make the oil splatter and burn someone.
- Avoid cross-contamination. Don't put cooked food on an unwashed plate or cutting board that was used with raw food. Always use a clean plate and clean utensils.
- Keep dishtowels, potholders and paper and plastic packaging away from the range top and oven so they don't catch fire.

Here are two great tasting food ideas that kids will love.

Berry Beary Banana Split

Prep: 5 minutes
Total: 5 minutes

- 1 large banana, cut lengthwise in half
- 1 container (8 oz.) vanilla low-fat yogurt
- 1/2 cup TEDDY GRAHAMS Cinnamon Graham Snacks
- 1 cup sliced strawberries

PLACE one banana half in each of two sundae dishes or cereal bowls.

TOP with remaining ingredients.

SERVE immediately.

Makes 2 servings.

Nutrition Bonus:

Nutritious and delicious, this berry-banana split is a good source of fiber from the bananas and strawberries. The yogurt is a good source of calcium, and the strawberries are high in vitamin C.

Nutrition Information Per Serving: 290 calories, 4.5g total fat, 1.5g saturated fat, 10mg cholesterol, 170mg sodium, 56g carbohydrate, 4g dietary fiber, 39g sugars, 7g protein, 2%DV vitamin A, 90%DV vitamin C, 20%DV calcium, 6%DV iron.

Exchange: 1 Fruit, 1 Milk (FF), 2 Carbohydrate

Ham & Apple Waffle Melt

Prep: 10 minutes
Total: 12 minutes

- 4 frozen waffles (4 inch), toasted
- 4 slices OSCAR MAYER Smoked Ham
- 1 large apple, thinly sliced
- 2 tsp. Cinnamon sugar
- 4 KRAFT 2% Milk Singles

PREHEAT broiler. Place waffles in single layer on baking sheet; top with remaining ingredients, ending with 2% Milk Singles on top.

BROIL 2 minutes or until 2% Milk Singles begin to melt.

Makes 4 servings, one topped waffle each.

Nutrition Bonus:

Try this open-faced sandwich as part of your breakfast or for a hearty afternoon snack. The 2% Milk Singles provide an excellent source of calcium.

Nutrition Information Per Serving: 190 calories, 6g total fat, 2.5g saturated fat, 30mg cholesterol, 790mg sodium, 24g carbohydrate, 2g dietary fiber, 10g sugars, 10g protein, 15%DV vitamin A, 4%DV vitamin C, 30%DV calcium, 10%DV iron.

Exchange: 1 Starch, 1/2 Fruit, 1 Meat (L), 1 Fat

Dietary Exchanges based on Choose Your Foods: Exchange Lists for Diabetes © 2008 by the American Diabetes Association and the American Dietetic Association.