

# Nutrition Facts

## Cooking with your Kids

Looking for extra help in the kitchen? Try involving your kids! Having them help you in the kitchen will allow you to spend time together. Also it allows your children and teen to develop valuable skills!

Benefits of preparing meals together with children and teens include<sup>1</sup>:

- Parents and caregivers are able to act as positive role models
- Children and teens:
  - Learn about healthier food choices.
  - Practice their language skills by reading a recipe, asking questions and following instructions.
  - Practice their math by counting, sorting, measuring and working with fractions.
  - Practice their social skills by working together, taking turns, and sharing equipment.
  - May be more willing to try new foods, if they have helped make it.
  - Will learn to prepare meals and make healthier food choices.
  - May eat more vegetables and fruits and have less fried foods and sweetened drinks.



### Tips for Success

- Involve them in cooking, as well as planning the meal, grocery shopping and cleaning up!
- Plan ahead. Have all the foods and tools you need ready to go!
- Involve your children in cooking when you aren't rushing to eat, especially if it is their first time helping.
- Be prepared for a messy cleanup, extra time in preparing the food and the need to supervise closely.
- Practice food safety. Teach your children why, how and when to wash their hands and the food.
- Give your child an age appropriate tasks. Children learn faster when they are actively involved, rather than just watching.
- Let them help as much as possible. Be sure to ask them if they need help if they are having trouble.



<sup>1</sup> Chu et al. (2012). Involvement in home meal preparation is associated with food preference and self-efficacy among Canadian children. *Public Health Nutrition*

<sup>2</sup> UnlockFood.ca. (2016). Cooking with Kids. Retrieved from [www.unlockfood.ca](http://www.unlockfood.ca)

## How can my child or teen help? <sup>2</sup>

- Children and teens may need extra supervision or help when first starting to help you in the kitchen.
- Be sure to supervise children at all times, especially when using knives, using appliances or completing any other potentially dangerous task.
- Use the ideas below to help get you started. But remember, these are just suggestions. Your child or teen may be able to do more or less.

### 2- 3 year olds can:

- wash vegetables and fruit
- tear lettuce and salad greens
- help find ingredients in the fridge
- put ingredients in a bowl
- stir ingredients with your help

### 3-4 year olds can:

- mash potatoes or bananas
- pour ingredients into a batter
- remove eggshells from hardboiled eggs
- mix together batter or other mixtures

### 4-6 year olds can:

- measure dry & liquid ingredients
- crack and beat eggs
- set the table
- place cheese and toppings on pizzas

### 6-8 year olds can:

- use simple equipment, like a grater or blender
- help read the recipe and write the grocery list
- toss salad ingredients together
- make a simple breakfast

### 8-11 year olds can:

- make their own school lunch
- use the stove with supervision for simple recipes
- cut easy to cut foods like bread, cooked vegetables
- plan meals

### 11 year olds and up can:

- do anything you feel they are ready for
- assemble and mix most ingredients
- follow more complicated recipes with your help

## For more information

- UnlockFood.ca – [Cooking with Kids](http://www.unlockfood.ca) – [www.unlockfood.ca](http://www.unlockfood.ca)