

NEWS RELEASE

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NEW ADVENTURES IN COOKING! FOR KIDS

March is National Nutrition Month. To celebrate, the Health Unit and Big Brothers Big Sisters are working together to offer *Adventures in Cooking!*, a food skills initiative for 8-12 year olds, available through the Health Unit. The program teaches children how to prepare healthy foods, while learning cooking terms and the basic principles of food and kitchen safety.

During *Adventures in Cooking!*, healthy eating is encouraged with a focus on vegetables and fruit. Children prepare a complete meal using inexpensive foods from simple recipes. They get to try new foods while getting comfortable in the kitchen.

Adventures in Cooking! promotes the importance of families sitting down to share a meal together. It also shows how the whole family can help to prepare meals – whether it's food preparation, setting the table or clean up.

If your organization or agency offers programming for children and youth and is interested in learning more about *Adventures in Cooking!*, call the Health Unit for more information at 705-474-1400 or 1-800-563-2808 extension 2532.

Quote

“We are very excited about *Adventures in Cooking!* because it has the potential to really impact family meal environments. It promotes going back to the basics – families cooking and eating together, both for their health and mental well-being. It gives kids the confidence to say ‘I know how to do that’ or ‘I can help’ when meal preparation is happening. It also reinforces to parents that it’s a good thing to spend time with their kids in the kitchen.”

- Erin Reyce, Public Health Dietitian

“Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Bay and District is a non-profit volunteer organization committed to fostering the optimal development of children and youth through one-to-one mentoring services and growth-based programs. *Adventures in Cooking!* provides the kids in our program with some hands-on experience with cooking. It’s a great way to spice up our programming and try something new.”

– K’Sah Woodley, Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Bay and District

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Quick Facts

- For a number of reasons, many families have come to rely on packaged, prepared convenience foods, and food skills aren't being passed on to children and youth as they have been in the past.
- "Food Skills" means food preparation techniques, knowledge about food and nutrition, meal planning, being able to adjust recipes and plan for leftovers, and knowing different ways to cook foods to maximize nutrition.
- Although high schools provide optional food and nutrition classes, schools do not provide instruction on food skill development as part of their required curriculum.
- Children are more likely to eat what they help to prepare, which helps parents with picky eaters.
- Negative health effects are associated with a diet high in sodium, saturated fat and refined carbohydrates, ingredients that tend to be present in most processed foods. This reinforces the importance of knowing how to cook meals from scratch. For example, 77% of dietary sodium comes from processed foods. If more meals were prepared from scratch, less sodium would be consumed.
- Fewer families take the time to have a sit down meal together. Often families eat in front of the TV or family members eat in different rooms on their own. However, research has shown that families that eat together eat better. Also, children and youth with families who regularly eat supper together have lower rates of disordered eating and substance misuse.

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