

Food for Thought

April 2020

Tips for Staying Healthy While Social Distancing

1. **Make meal planning and preparing part of your daily routine.** This will save money, time, and stress and help you and your family get more variety and healthier meals. Learn how to create balanced meals incorporating the 5 food groups at www.choosemyplate.gov

2. **Get the Kids Cooking.** Get kids involved based on their age and ability:

- 3 to 5 years old: mix simple ingredients, snap green beans, tear lettuce for a salad, press cookie cutters
- 6 to 7 years old: peel raw fruits and vegetables, shuck corn, use a vegetable peeler, crack eggs, measure ingredients
- 8 to 9 years old: use a can opener, juice citrus fruits, check the temperature of foods with a thermometer, beat eggs, pound chicken on a cutting board
- Children ages 10 and older: slice or chop vegetables, boil potatoes, microwave foods, bake foods in the oven, simmer ingredients on the stove



3. **Family Meals.** Family meals don't just mean better nutrition. Children of families who regularly eat together also are more likely to have higher intakes of fruits and vegetables and have a healthy weight and are less likely to have behavior problems or use drugs, cigarettes or alcohol when they get older. Plus, they're closer to their parents.

Make family meals even more fun by letting your child choose nightly themes and menus. Or switch things up by taking it from the table to the floor – put a blanket on the ground to have an indoor picnic!

4. **Keep the family healthy by practicing proper food safety.**



Start by washing hands with soapy water for at least 20 seconds (about the time it takes to sing two choruses of "Happy Birthday"). Dry hands with disposable paper towels, clean cloth towels or air dry. If anyone has long hair, be sure to put it back in a ponytail.

Wash surfaces, cutting boards, dishes and cooking utensils with hot soapy water after each use to prevent bacteria from spreading throughout the kitchen. Rinse produce under running tap water, no soap required. Avoid washing seafood, meat, poultry or eggs as this can cause more bacteria to spread.

Teach kids not to lick their fingers when preparing food and not to eat raw ingredients.

5. **Take time to get some physical activity every day.** Get outside and go on a family walk or set up space in your house to do some stretching or an exercise video. There currently are many free online physical activity resources available.

6. **Unplug and Connect.** Children spend on average almost 7.5 hours each day with media while many adults spend 11 hours a day with media. Reducing the amount of time your child or teen (and you) spends with media will have a positive lifestyle impact. Take this time to reconnect as a family rather than increasing screen time.

Banana Oatmeal Cookies

1 cup oatmeal
2 over ripe medium bananas
½ teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon vanilla
½ cup chocolate chips or raisins



1. Wash hands.
2. Preheat oven to 350°.
3. Mash bananas with a fork until smooth.
4. Add oatmeal, cinnamon, vanilla, and raisins or chocolate chips.
5. Drop spoonfuls of dough onto lightly spraked or oiled baking sheet. Flatten with the back of spoon or bottom of a drinking glass.
6. Bake for 10-15 minutes. Cool before serving.

Oven French Toast

12 slices whole grain bread
4 eggs or 8 egg whites
1 cup nonfat or 1% milk
¼ cup packed brown sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
powdered sugar (optional)



1. Wash hands.
2. Preheat oven to 325°F.
3. Lightly spray a cookie sheet with sides or two 9x13 inch pans with cooking spray.
4. Lay the slices of bread flat on the pan with the sides touching.
5. Beat egg, milk, brown sugar, and vanilla until very well blended.
6. Pour mixture over bread. Turn each slice over to ensure both sides are wet.
7. Cover and refrigerate overnight or bake immediately for 30 minutes.
8. Serve hot. Sprinkle lightly with powdered sugar (optional). Top with applesauce, fruit or yogurt.
9. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Sources: <https://extension.colostate.edu/docs/pubs/foodnut/social-distancing.pdf>; https://www.eatright.org/health/wellness/preventing-illness/make-the-most-of-your-time-at-home?_zs=Va6Fa&_zl=8OC22; <https://foodhero.org/recipes/categories/1406> retrieved 02/26/20

Eat Smart Idaho offers FREE classes that can help you learn how to eat well for less! During this challenging time stay tuned for some upcoming classes offered online.

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