

## July is National Culinary Arts Month

FORWARD DUPAGE is pleased to join others in celebrating July as National Culinary Arts Month. This is the perfect time to celebrate the skills and mastery of professional cooks and chefs and to toast their contributions to new culinary trends. To bring the celebration closer to home, FORWARD DUPAGE encourages families to focus in two specific areas: Making healthier food choices when the family dines together in a restaurant and celebrating the culinary arts at home by planning and preparing family meals and treats together.

The internet is filled with websites that offer tips on healthy dining. The American Heart Association has expertise in so many areas and in their article, *Dining Out Doesn't Mean Ditch Your Diet*<sup>i</sup> they offer these easy swaps that will help you make healthier choices.

### LOSE IT

- bacon, sausage & fatty, salty meats
- white bread, rice and pasta
- cream-based or cheese soups
- deep-fried, pan-fried, extra crispy, creamed, stuffed
- French fries
- refried beans
- sour cream, queso
- salty sauces like soy, teriyaki, cocktail, au jus
- all-you-can-eat, supersize, buffet
- traditional desserts, cookies, ice cream
- soda, sweet tea, sugary cocktails

### CHOOSE IT

- skinless chicken, fish, lean meat
- whole-grain bread, rice and pasta
- broth-based soup with lots of veggies
- grilled, sautéed, roasted, steamed, baked, poached
- baked potato or side salad
- pintos or black beans
- guacamole, pico de gallo
- light sauces flavored with herbs, spices, vinegar, wine
- a la carte, light menu, salad bar
- fresh fruit and fruit-based desserts
- water, 100% juice, diet soda, seltzer, spritzer

If you choose to dine in, engage your children in the planning and preparation process. For help check out the Chop Chop website @ <http://www.chopchopmag.org> . *ChopChop Family* is an innovative non-profit organization whose mission is to inspire and teach children and families to cook real food together. They believe that cooking and eating together as a family is a vital step in resolving the obesity and hunger epidemics.<sup>ii</sup> Their site is filled with tips, recipes, cookbooks and information on how to subscribe to the quarterly newsletter.

There are so many reasons to invite your children into the kitchen. Consider the warm and cozy feeling you get by focusing together and completing a cooking project. Celebrate the educational benefits children experience while working in the kitchen. And finally, take pride in your role in establishing healthy habits early in life and teaching life skills like planning meals, cooking and baking.

Cooking together gives you an opportunity to share nutrition and healthy eating tips with your children. It also allows you to add a bit of science as you discuss the role food plays in keeping our bodies healthy. So much of learning actually happens in the home and as you can see by the list below, a simple cooking project has a profound impact.

- **Math Skills:** cut food into parts, measure, weigh, count, sort, use timers, identify shapes and sizes, review or create charts and graphs (favorites, varieties, timing)
- **Science:** question, experiment, investigate, observe, predict, draw conclusions, grow plants, observe heating and cooling of foods, combine ingredients to make a whole
- **Language:** read recipe cards and charts, sequencing (steps, order of ingredients), share books about food and cooking, learn new words, describe ingredients and actions
- **Creativity:** combine various elements, make choices, compare colors and shapes, arrange foods, problem solve
- **Social Studies:** work cooperatively, share, solve problems, discuss similar/different, foods from cultural backgrounds, spend cozy time with family members, make memories
- **Physical Skills:** fine and gross motor control: roll, pinch, knead, pat, spread, cut, stir, shake, pour and scrub.
- **Emotional Skills:** feeling competent, autonomy, independence, self-confidence, pride, a sense of accomplishment
- **Sensory Exploration:** taste, touch, smell, see, hear, be an active learner

To get the full learning impact, keep these specific examples in mind.

- Measure (e.g., one cup, two teaspoons)
- Count (e.g., two eggs, four bananas)
- Sort (e.g., by color, by food group)
- Graph (e.g., favorites, percentage of each ingredient)
- Match (e.g., measuring cups, appliances to boxes)
- Observe (e.g., fruit dries, sun tea changes color)
- Compare (e.g., different melons, squash or apples)
- Predict (e.g., how will certain ingredients change the color, texture, flavor)
- Record (e.g., use words, pictures, photos to record observations)
- Investigate (e.g., what are all of the powders used in making muffins)
- Experiment (e.g., what tools get the job done)

Healthier Dining Out Tips:

<https://www.eatright.org/health/weight-loss/eating-out/7-tips-for-healthy-dining-out>

<https://www.parenting.com/toddler/feeding-nutrition/dining-out-kids-healthy-eating-dont-have-to-be-mutually-exclusive>

<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/eat-right/eating-out.htm>

<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/downloads/matte25.pdf>

Tips and Recipes for Cooking with Children:

<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/downloads/cookwithchildren.pdf>

<https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/packages/recipes-for-kids/cooking-with-kids>  
<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/kids-cook.html>  
<http://www.pbs.org/parents/food-and-fitness/eat-smart/cooking-with-kids/>  
<http://www.chopchopmag.org/recipes>

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/losing-weight/dining-out-doesnt-mean-ditch-your-diet>

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.chopchopmag.org>