

Healthy cooking in the community

**A comprehensive manual for
the delivery of practical cooking
sessions to encourage healthier
eating**

**Department of Nutrition and Dietetics
NHS Ayrshire and Arran**

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Foreword

The aims of this resource are:

- To share knowledge, resources and experience gained in developing the North Ayrshire Community Food Workers project – this will hopefully save duplication of effort and encourage the development of similar projects in other areas.
- To act as a resource for the delivery of individual workshops or sessions to community groups. It is a comprehensive guide to using the recipe book *Munch Crunch 2: Recipes 4 Change*, produced by NHS Ayrshire and Arran. It gives detailed session notes, recipes and shopping lists for all the recipes in *Munch Crunch 2*, as well as slightly more advanced recipes and activities to extend the programme.

The resource has been compiled by Gillian Dick and Alison Telfer, both Community Food Workers with the department of Nutrition and Dietetics, NHS Ayrshire and Arran. It is a summary of the experiences and knowledge that they gained during their seven years working as community food workers.

Initially the job was extremely challenging, they say. They didn't know how to reach their target audience, or how to engage with them and get the right messages across.

They hope this resource will set you well on the way to helping people within your local community to improve their diet and their health.

The proof, they say, is in the eating, so ... happy cooking!

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The North Ayrshire Community Food Worker project

Food plays a key role in all major illnesses in Scotland: obesity, coronary heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis and stroke. Diet is also known to influence some types of cancers.

However, a lack of skills, knowledge and confidence in preparing food has now become a major barrier to healthy eating.

In North Ayrshire there has been a huge rise in the number of people considered to be overweight and/or obese, which in turn has contributed to the increase in diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke and dental health problems and some cancers.

In 2000, as part of a pilot project, four part-time Community Food Workers were employed by NHS Ayrshire and Arran to promote the importance of eating a healthier diet, and to help people gain the confidence, knowledge and practical skills that would make a real difference to their diet and health.

The Community Food Worker project has helped bridge the gap between the local community – in particular those most vulnerable at risk – and health professionals.

The project has gone from strength to strength. The 8-week courses of informal and practical hands-on cooking sessions are usually two-hour sessions. They use easy, low-cost recipes which have been well tried and tested with our client groups. This has proved to be a successful formula and shown great results. Participants report increased confidence and skills and improved family and individual eating habits. More home-cooked food with a wider range of foods, especially fruits and vegetables, are eaten by most clients. Some clients have gone on to take food hygiene courses and enter the catering industry or take up other employment: they have commented that the cooking skills sessions have boosted their confidence to do this.

The credibility and success of the Community Food Worker project is partly down to the nutrition training and support provided by the team of community dietitians.

The project works with residents in areas which are the most deprived in North Ayrshire and within the most deprived 15% in Scotland (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004). These areas equate to over 25,000 people, 19% of North Ayrshire's total population.

Setting up a course of cooking classes

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Finding a venue

Finding a suitable venue is the first step in setting up a course of cooking classes.

You need to know where the classes will take place before you recruit participants – it's one of the first questions they'll ask.

The venue should ideally be as close to participants' homes as possible, preferably within walking distance. It must be easily accessible for everyone, with wheelchair and pram access and accessible toilets. Some people will be reluctant or unable to travel a great distance to a class.

Access for the class leader is also an important factor.

Before deciding on the venue, carry out detailed risk assessments covering the following key questions.

Is the room suitable?

There should be suitable tables and chairs to allow participants to work together round one large table as a group. This lets the class get to know and support one another, and makes it easier for the leader to observe everyone and give help as needed.

If you're using tabletop cookers, the tables must be suitable to hold them safely. Tables for cookers need to be positioned against a wall close to a socket, so the cable can run safely down the back of the table.

There should be as many sockets as there are cookers, because it's not advisable to use adapters or extension cables.

Is the kitchen area suitable?

You will need hot water and adequate washing up facilities. There should also be a separate sink for hand washing (other than in the toilets), with anti-bacterial hand wash.

If the food preparation area and kitchen area are not in the same room, a hatch or other means for the leader to observe class members is important.

The size of the kitchen is also very important, although a dishwashing rota is always a good idea so that everyone doesn't have to be in a small space at once.

Is the venue accessible?

Think about how far the leader will have to carry shopping for the class, and equipment not stored at the venue, from their car to the room. A number of trips may be needed in order to adhere to safe moving and handling procedures.

Consider how many internal fire doors will have to be negotiated when moving equipment and cookers between the storage and cooking area.

Are storage facilities suitable?

The venue should have suitable facilities for storing tabletop cookers and boxes of equipment, ideally under lock and key and accessible for carrying to the area where they will be used. Tabletop cookers should be stored at waist height for ease of moving and handling. Current NHS Ayrshire and Arran manual handling guidelines suggest that 16kg is the safe limit for

lifting items from waist height. However, The Manual Handling Operations Regulations (1992) set no such weight limits.

Knives should not be stored at venues. The class leader should carry them personally – a small lockable box could be useful.

Will it be safe for a lone worker?

If the class leader is conducting the class alone, i.e. in a hall without a caretaker present or other workers, then their employer may well have a lone worker system in place. Consider whether the venue has mobile phone network coverage to support the safe use of this system.

Equipment required for running a cooking class

All the equipment used for a cooking skills class should be basic kitchen equipment that most participants should either have at home already or be able to purchase very cheaply.

The equipment listed below should be able to be stored in 3 large plastic stacking storage boxes with lids, which will be stored at the venue for the duration of the class.

For a class of 8

- 8 large saucepans with lids (20cm)
- 8 chopping boards
- 8 large plastic mixing bowls
- 8 wooden spoons
- 8 rectangular baking trays (some sessions may need more) – check size is suitable if using tabletop ovens
- 4 plastic measuring jugs
- 4 graters
- 4 colanders
- 2 large sieves
- 2 large serving spoons
- 2 large slotted spoons
- 2 potato mashers
- 2 fish slices
- 4 oven gloves
- anti-bacterial cleaning spray
- washing up liquid
- disposable washing up cloths
- pan scourers
- roll of cling film
- roll of kitchen foil
- large freezer bags
- roll of disposable plastic aprons

The class leader should also carry from class to class:

- cutlery
- 8 short vegetable knives
- 2 or 3 garlic crushers
- 8 vegetable peelers (Y shaped peelers are good for preparing coleslaw and many people find them easier to use)
- 2 or 3 can openers
- tea towels or roll of paper towel for drying dishes
- fire blanket
- first aid kit
- tabletop mat depicting the Eatwell Plate

It is useful to have 1 or 2 large stock pots for some sessions where it is more practical to prepare a large pot of potatoes or rice for the whole group to accompany the dish they are preparing during that session.

Cookers and hobs

You will also need to buy 4 tabletop cookers comprising an oven and two cooking rings. These should weigh no more than 16kg. Give thought to the size of the oven, which will need to

accommodate 2 standard baking trays. Ideally the controls should be easy to read, and the class leader should spend time ensuring that all the participants know how to operate the cookers safely.

Some venues have very well-equipped catering kitchens. In this case the leader may be able to use the oven in the venue following suitable risk assessment and assuming it will accommodate 8 baking trays. You could then use small double hobs instead of tabletop cookers.

Cookers should be set up on suitable tables around the room, ensuring that everyone has adequate space to work and that a pot stand is available for everyone when they remove pans from the heat.

Various tabletop cookers or hobs of varying size and weight are readily available at most high-street electrical retailers at a range of prices.

All electrical equipment used in the class should be PAT-tested (portable appliance tested) for safety on a yearly basis and before first use.

Smoothie-making kit

A smoothie-making kit which can be stored in a large lidded plastic container will be useful for some sessions, e.g. to accompany the fruit salad session. More ideas for smoothie-making are available in the section on smoothies.

Typically a smoothie kit should include:

- 1 jug blender with 1½ litre capacity
- 1 small chopping board
- 1 small paring knife
- 1 plastic measuring jug
- 1 packet straws
- 1 can opener
- laminated instructions for safety and hygiene of blender

Recruiting participants for a cooking class

The aim of the cooking skills classes will be to increase awareness of the benefits of healthy eating and to give people the skills to make healthier family meals. But participants will also achieve many other positive outcomes from attending.

Classes should offer participants a relaxed and informal way of becoming actively involved in changing their own and their families' eating habits. Many people have reported increases in confidence and self-esteem, positive lifestyle changes and the benefits of getting out of the house and making new friends.

Recruiting for participants to come to a class can often be challenging. Some projects' funding may be limited or may only let them work with people from specific postcode areas.

Referrals from existing groups and agencies

Often classes are made up of clients from existing groups which you may have contacted or which may approach your agency to provide a class or workshop. These can be very successful, especially where clients have additional needs (e.g. people who have learning disabilities or mental health issues, or young people on alternative school curriculum who may exhibit challenging behaviour). Some clients may have problems with self-confidence and prefer to attend with peers for support.

People may also be referred from other agencies such as GPs or health visitors. Or they may be recruited at Health Fairs run by Health Boards or other agencies, where the class leader can set up an information stall and encourage people to sign up.

The personal touch

If you're recruiting for a class from scratch, it has been found that the 'personal touch' is by far the best way. You can use posters and flyers to advertise the class starting, but often these don't yield good results.

Speaking directly to people in the community has proved to be very successful. You could visit existing community groups, such as parent and toddler groups or bingo groups. Or you could set up an information stand and chat to prospective participants.



Information stands work best if they're set up somewhere where there are lots of people coming and going – the local corner shop is often a good choice. Make sure you get permission, wherever you go.

An easy competition to win a prize such as a smoothie maker is also a great draw. It allows you to collect names and telephone numbers of prospective participants, and provides a good opening for chatting to people. If your project can only include people from regeneration data zones, asking for postcodes on the competition entry form lets you identify potential recruits without causing offence to

those who don't qualify. A box to tick on the competition entry form will allow people to indicate whether they are interested in coming along to a cooking class.

These methods of informally chatting to prospective recruits in the community allow you to give lots of information about the class that will be starting. It's also a way for the participants to get to know you, reducing the fear of turning up at something new and not seeing a friendly face.

A follow-up phone call reminding participants of the start date and giving some friendly encouragement that you are looking forward to seeing them there goes a long way to making them feel comfortable and getting them through the door on the first day of the class.

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Preparing the venue for a cooking class

It is advisable to arrive at the venue half an hour early in order to have the venue set up safely for the group arriving.

Keep moving and handling guidance in mind when taking food and equipment from your car to the venue. Make several trips to minimise the risk of injury.

Make sure that all ingredients requiring refrigeration have been safely transported in cool bags, with ice packs if required, and transferred into the fridge at the venue if possible.

Food preparation tables



Tables should be set up in the middle of the room in a way that lets you and the class members sit together round one large table. This means techniques can be demonstrated, conversation can flow freely, and everyone can see what others are doing – this all makes for an informal atmosphere. Chairs should be provided, although some people may prefer to stand while actually preparing their food.

All tables should be cleaned with anti-bacterial spray before any equipment or food is laid on them. If tables are cleaned thoroughly before laying down chopping boards, chopping

boards can be turned over during food preparation removing the need for more than one set of boards. Remember, though, that boards and knives should be washed thoroughly immediately after preparing raw meat. See Food safety and hygiene notes for more information.

Cookers and hobs

For the tabletop cookers or hobs, 4 sturdy tables should be set up around the venue adjacent to electrical sockets and against the wall. Cables should be fed down the back of the table and should not be left trailing.

No more than four cookers should be in use at one time as this may cause the electricity circuit to trip.

Cookers should be placed in the centre of the table with a pot stand on either side to allow people to safely remove any pans from the heat.

Equipment and ingredients

Large boxes of equipment should be set upon another table and be accessible for you and the participants.

Ingredients for the session should be unpacked and should be accessible for the group to help themselves, remembering to keep raw meat etc. refrigerated until required.

In the middle of the table, lay out the ingredients for the session on the appropriate sections of the Eatwell tabletop mat. Alternatively, to reinforce learning from the first session, at subsequent sessions you could ask the participants to place the ingredients on the correct section.

It may be useful to place extra bowls on the table for vegetable peelings etc.

Lay out disposable aprons for each person and make sure they're used.

Lay out chopping boards and the other main utensils required for the day's session as per 'what you need' section of the *Munch Crunch 2* recipe book at each person's place. For safety, keep knives under close supervision – hand them out at the last minute as they're needed, and count them back in at the end of the session.

Make sure that there's hot water, washing up liquid, cloths and tea towels in the kitchen and that the bin is accessible.

Anti-bacterial hand wash should also be available and all participants and workers should wash their hands before starting to prepare any food and at any other times as necessary. See Food safety and hygiene notes for more information.



Food safety and hygiene

Food safety and hygiene are extremely important when running cooking groups.

We want to give the group the message that home cooking need not be time consuming and difficult. So we may not wish to follow the strict guidelines that would be observed in a commercial food preparation establishment – e.g. no jewellery, watches or nail polish; use of hair nets, etc. But we do need to ensure that good hygiene practices are adhered to within the class, and that we give participants the right information – perhaps as written instructions – on the safe transport, storage and reheating of food they've prepared in the class.

The Food Standards Agency produces many resources that can be given to people to take away.

Good practice during the class

During the class the following good practice should be adhered to at all times.

All tables (including the tables that cookers are on) and kitchen surfaces should be cleaned with anti-bacterial spray before use.

The class leader should ensure there is an adequate supply of hot water and washing up liquid and check that the group are using them when they are washing dishes.

The class leader should ensure that all equipment is properly cleaned before being stored away after the session.

Everyone must wash their hands with hot water and anti-bacterial soap before beginning to prepare food. This must be repeated after touching the hair or face, blowing the nose or sneezing, visiting the toilet, or handling raw meat or fish.

Chopping boards, knives and any other equipment which has been in contact with raw meat or fish must be washed thoroughly with hot soapy water before continuing to prepare any other foods.

Dishwashing cloths should be disposable and should never be used for more than one session. A separate cloth should be used for cleaning tables and surfaces.

For tasting food, only disposable spoons should be used and they should only be put into the food once.

Participants should only touch/prepare their own food.

At the end of the class

At the end of each session when food has been cooked the following points should be reinforced to the group:

- Food must be allowed to cool down before being taken home in a sealed container.
- Putting warm food into a refrigerator will allow the temperature of the fridge to rise and allow bacteria to multiply, which may cause food poisoning. To cool food quickly, store it in a cool room (e.g. garage). Or place the pan in a sink of cold water loosely covered, changing the water frequently until the food has cooled.
- Food which is not refrigerated will allow bacteria to multiply. So once it is properly cooled, clients should put their cooked food straight into the middle or top shelf of their fridge at home.

- The temperature of a fridge should be between 0°C and 5°C. It may be useful to issue each client with, or encourage each client to buy, a fridge thermometer at the beginning of the course. These are available cheaply from many supermarkets.
- If clients wish to divide the food they have made up into smaller portions to freeze, this should be done the same day and frozen in a suitable container or freezer bag.
- If clients wish to reheat smaller portions of their food, they should take out only the amount that they need and reheat it until it is piping hot.
- Food should never be reheated more than once.
- All food prepared in the class and being taken home should be eaten within 24 hours.

*These points should be reinforced and adhered to at **every** session in order to comply with the risk assessment requirements.*

Healthy eating messages

Before embarking on the first hands-on cooking session, have an induction session that gives an introduction to healthy eating, using the Gastronomic Game (see 'supporting resources section'). This is also an ideal opportunity to introduce label reading.

The emphasis in the recipes is on introducing more fruit and vegetables while reducing intake of saturated fats, added sugar and salt levels in the diet. The sessions are based on the Eatwell Plate model.

The following messages should be reiterated as often as possible during sessions and consolidated by using supporting activities on hidden fats, hidden sugars and salt (see supporting resources section).

Fruit and vegetables

Messages

5 a day.

Fresh, frozen and canned all count towards the 5 a day.

Fruit and vegetables:

- are low in fat and calories
- contain lots of vitamins, minerals, and fibre which our bodies can't make
- are a good source of antioxidants which help our body's immune system and protect from illness
- are essential for good health.

Some vitamins can't be stored by the body so we need to eat them every day.

Evidence suggests that people who eat lots of fruit and vegetables are less likely to develop long-term diseases such as coronary heart disease and some cancers.

Reinforcing the messages

Include frozen and canned fruit and vegetables in each session, because they

- can be much cheaper and more convenient, especially for people living alone,
- can reduce waste
- are useful store cupboard items for times when someone can't get out to shop.

Give examples of portion sizes, for instance using Five a Day Portion information cards. A glass of pure fruit juice or a smoothie counts as one portion once a day only. The emphasis is on eating a variety.

Starchy foods

Messages

These include bread, cereals and potatoes.

Starchy foods should make up about a third of what we eat.

They:

- are a good source of energy,
- are our main source of a range of nutrients,
- can be a cheap snack, and can bulk out stews and soups,
- can help you feel full,
- are a good source of fibre, and help prevent constipation.

Try to include at least one starchy food with each meal, e.g. toast with breakfast, rice with chilli, mashed potato with mince, roll with soup.

Wholegrains and brown rice are better for you than white. They are higher in fibre and important for a healthy digestive system. Try mixing brown and white pastas and rice 50:50.

We digest starchy foods more slowly and they can help us feel full for longer.

Most breads and some cereals are 'fortified' and therefore a useful source of some vitamins and minerals.

Starting the day with a healthy breakfast means you are less likely to reach for unhealthier snacks later in the morning.

Reinforcing the messages

It's a good idea to take along different types to encourage people to taste and use them.

Fats

Messages

Think about how much fat you eat and also the type of fat in your food.

Reduce foods high in saturated fat or replace these foods with ones high in unsaturated fat instead (polyunsaturated and monounsaturated).

Eating too much saturated fat can increase the amount of cholesterol in the blood, which increases the chance of developing heart disease.

We need some fat in our diet. Unsaturated fats:

- provide essential fatty acids that the body needs,
- may help prevent heart disease

Unsaturated fats are found in oily fish such as herring, mackerel, sardines, pilchards, salmon and trout.

Reinforcing the messages

Encourage the group to think about the butter/spreads used on toast and bread as well as oils etc. used in cooking. Use fats sparingly and discuss healthier cooking methods.

Incorporate a Hidden Fat game as an activity into one of the sessions to reinforce this message.

Salt

In general we eat too much salt. The recommended level for an adult is 6g per day (about a level teaspoon). Ready meals and processed foods all contain high levels of salt, and so many people consume at least 9g of salt per day.

If we reduce the amount of salt we add to our food, our taste buds will get used to it in a few weeks.

Reinforcing the messages

In *Munch Crunch 2* recipes there is no addition of salt except what is contained in stocks or bottled sauces. Our aim is to reduce the amount added to food we cook.

Use a Traffic Light Salt game to increase knowledge of added salt in many everyday products from cereals to savouries.

Sugar

Most people consume too much sugar. The recommended maximum is 10–12 teaspoons a day (50–60g). Most people take about double this. Many children take up to six times the recommended amount.

Excess sugar:

- is stored in the body as fat,
- contributes to an increase in dental decay, especially in children.

Many of our favourite foods including breakfast cereals and biscuits have high levels of added sugar. We also have to take account of fizzy drinks and the sugar we add to tea, sprinkle on cereal, or use to sweeten yoghurts.

Sugar provides energy. It adds calories but no nutrients. No more than 10% of our total energy intake should come from sugars – 1g of sugar is the equivalent of 4 calories.

Ways to reduce sugar intake:

- Enjoy natural sweet treats – fresh fruit, canned varieties in juice (not syrup), frozen fruit, dried fruits provided they aren't sugar-coated.
- Check labels – things like sauces, breakfast cereals, baked beans and tinned sweetcorn may contain added sugars – and look for lower sugar versions.
- Limit sweet drinks, processed juices and diluting fruit juices or fizzy drinks. Try adding sparkling water or soda water or just plain water to pure unsweetened fruit juice (at least half and half for children).

If you gradually reduce the amount of sugar added to cereals, tea and coffee your taste buds will get used to it and eventually you may prefer it.

Reinforcing the messages

All recipes used have little or no added sugar. If sugar is needed, the recipes use more natural sources, e.g. dried fruit, pure unsweetened fruit juice.

Use a Hidden Sugar game in an appropriate session as an extra activity to increase awareness.

Discuss issues around using alternative sweeteners or diet versions of drinks. Although they contain no calories and can be appropriate for some people, in general they are much sweeter and can create a desire for other sweeter tasting foods which will be high in calories. Also, we don't really know the effect of a lifetime of sweeteners will have on the body.

Pure unsweetened fruit juices and smoothies: Remind the group that these should form only part of a meal. Say that children should be encouraged to use a straw. Point out that although the sugar in pure juices (fructose) is natural, all sugary and fizzy drinks can cause tooth decay and erosion of tooth enamel – especially in children – and therefore should be limited. Water and milk are best.

Supporting resources

These resources have all been tried and tested in the North Ayrshire/Ayrshire and Arran Community Food Workers project.

Gastronomic game (Newcastle Nutrition)

This consists of a large plastic floor mat showing the Eatwell Plate with a selection of foods for each group.

Plastic foods are available to purchase (e.g. from Replica Foods) and can be supplemented by collecting clean empty packets and tins or food pictures and labels.

This is a most useful resource and has been widely used in the project. Playing the game is a great ice-breaker for any induction session to healthy eating. The mat is a good visual aid and very clearly demonstrates how to make diets healthier.

Contact: Newcastle Nutrition, Royal Victoria Infirmary, Queen Victoria Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4LP. Tel. 0191 282 5930 nutrition@trvi.nuth.northy.nhs.uk

Comic Company, 14 Loxley Road, LONDON, SW18 3LJ, Tel: 0208 5168 168 email: info@comiccompany.co.uk. www.comiccompany.co.uk.

Tabletop mats (Newcastle Nutrition)

These mats are a much smaller version of those in the Gastronomic game and are used in every session to reinforce the Eatwell Plate message with each meal being prepared.

An idea is to have the group identify ingredients and to sort them into the relevant sections at the start of the session, accompanied by questions like 'what do we have most of and why?' or 'which ingredients are we using less of?'

Contact: Newcastle Nutrition, Royal Victoria Infirmary, Queen Victoria Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4LP. Tel. 0191 282 5930. nutrition@trvi.nuth.northy.nhs.uk

Comic Company, 14 Loxley Road, LONDON, SW18 3LJ, Tel: 0208 5168 168, email: info@comiccompany.co.uk. www.comiccompany.co.uk.

Pull-up banner (NHS Ayrshire and Arran community dietitians)

A light, portable pull-up banner that is very quickly displayed, depicting some simple eye-catching healthy eating messages and the Eatwell Plate. Used both in the delivery of sessions and at health promotion events or recruiting activities.



Comic Company

Comic Company sells a wide range of colourful, appealing resources on healthy eating, the Eatwell message, and a variety of other health issues. They include stickers, balloons, bookmarks, postcards and quiz sheets as well as booklets, leaflets and posters.

Contact: Comic Company, 14 Loxley Road, London, SW18 3LJ. Tel. 0208 5168 168. Email info@comiccompany.co.uk. www.comiccompany.co.uk.



Hidden Fat, Hidden Sugar and Traffic Light Salt games (NHS Ayrshire and Arran community dietitians)

Simple but again very visual games for conveying key messages, and are used throughout the delivery of the Ayrshire and Arran programme. The resource can be put together using plastic food models or simply with packets, cans or pictures.

Simple information cards can be printed and laminated, together with instructions to make up the game.

Accompanying sheets *Hidden Fats* and *Hidden Sugars*, which give the number of teaspoons of sugar or butter pats of fat in each food, are then photocopied and distributed, encouraging further discussion. The Salt game uses FSA resources as supporting literature.

Replica Foods

Replica Foods sells food models which can be used for schools and general educational activities.

Contact: Tel. 020 8523 3524. Email sales@replica.co.uk. www.replica.co.uk

Food Standards Agency

The Food Standards Agency has many useful resources, including:

- Eatwell Plate leaflets
- good resources on salt, e.g. *The Little Book of Salt*, that are suitable for most client groups,
- fridge/freezer thermometers,
- food safety leaflets.

Contact: Tel 0845 606 0667. www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/publications.

After the course

Depending on funds, you may wish to provide some things for the group to take home at the end of the course, as an encouragement to carry on with their healthy cooking in the home by using and varying the recipes.

In the North Ayrshire project, we provided:

- A recipe book – *Munch Crunch 2: Recipes 4 Change*,
- 2 Munch Crunch aprons and tea towels
- A basic stick blender (especially useful for soups etc and where there is a need to disguise vegetables for fussy children)

Starter kits (given only to most vulnerable clients with greatest need), comprising 20" lidded stainless steel saucepan, vegetable knife, chopping board, peeler, can opener, whisk, measuring jug, colander, baking bowl, tea towels, grater, wooden spoon – all presented in a washing up bowl. These items were usually supermarkets' own brands.



A typical starter kit provides clients with essentials to cook recipes in the cookbook Munch Crunch 2: Recipes 4 Change

Shopping for cooking classes – general advice

Individual shopping lists are included for each session detailed in this manual.

Each shopping list will provide sufficient ingredients for a class size of 8 and will allow clients to produce up to 4 family portions* to take home rather than consume at the class. This encourages and stimulates interest in healthier eating in other family members, and lets them taste and try new foods they wouldn't have otherwise.

* Some clients in the group may be willing to bulk out the dish being cooked with extra vegetables, pasta etc., and will of course have noticeably larger portions than others.

Disposable plastic teaspoons

Buy a large bag of disposable plastic teaspoons. Providing each client with sufficient disposable plastic teaspoons to taste each others' dishes will result in interesting comments. You will need to spell out that they only taste once with each spoon!

Food storage containers

Purchasing basic lidded food storage containers at the start of the course (one per client) cuts down on hassle and reduces the risk of contamination.

The 4litre size is suitable.

Supermarkets' own brands can be cheaper.

Clients then keep their own box but are asked to bring it back for their own use in other subsequent sessions. Keep a few spare boxes for taking food home, though, in case clients forget.

Ovenproof dishes

Again it is a good idea to purchase a medium sized basic ovenproof dish for if your class includes any sessions that require one (e.g. cauliflower bake, fish pie, cottage pie).

These needn't be expensive. Supermarkets generally have a basic range (such as those on pages 44 and 73 of *Munch Crunch 2* recipe book) that can be purchased for a few pounds each.

Lack of basic kitchen equipment is often a barrier for many of our target groups. Providing it in advance makes it easier to share out ingredients fairly and can reduce embarrassment.

Ask clients then to bring them back for each session as required.

Taking food home

Finally remember to think about how your group will carry their goodies home safely, as this may involve bus journeys or a long hike!

In the past it's been sensible to use the plastic carriers provided with the shopping for the group. However, with the emphasis now on reducing use of plastic carriers this can present problems. If funds are available you could buy long life shoppers such as hessian bags (although you may have to consider any problems associated with the branding logos on many of these).

It may be useful to encourage each client to buy a fridge thermometer at the beginning of the course. These are available from many supermarkets.

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Introduction to using the session plans

There are enough session plans to provide a choice of sessions for an 8-week course:

- an induction session
- 12 main cooking session plans based on the recipes in *Munch Crunch 2* and designed to cover all the main healthy eating messages
- 11 extra cooking session plans based on additional recipes and designed to give more choice of sessions, or to consolidate what has been learned. These plans were created in response to the particular needs of previous groups or in some cases individual members

Most of the cooking session plans contain:

- session plan,
- shopping list for 8 clients to create a dish for 4 people,
- making the dish.

By following these session plans, using the supporting resources and reinforcing the main healthy eating messages you will be following a well tried and tested formula which has met with consistent success in the North Ayrshire project.

The first session with a group is always an induction to healthier eating. This is an opportunity to discover the needs and existing skills of the group members. It's also a chance to make sure that clients aren't overwhelmed and feel comfortable enough to want to return.

This has always been followed with the first hands-on practical session on soups, using the minestrone recipe.

Thereafter you can decide which sessions to do next by choosing from the options and the group's preferences.

Induction session

This will usually be the first time your client group will have come together. It's important to make them feel comfortable and at ease, as some may feel anxious or nervous and unsure of what to expect.

Make sure the room or venue you have chosen is comfortable, and offer tea or coffee on arrival.

Ice-breaker games have been successful in some cases. But we have generally found that clients feel intimidated by them because they lack confidence when they first arrive.

Start with introductions and perhaps a brief outline of the classes you have planned, what to expect etc.

Point out fire exits, toilets, and any other general housekeeping arrangements specific to your chosen venue.

This session is an opportunity to break down any barriers that exist. Hopefully you'll be able to capture their interest so much so that they will return for your next planned session. Although you act in a professional manner it is important to convey a relaxed and informal approach.

What to cover in this first session

Get people talking

The session is about introducing the group to the benefits of healthier eating, but try not to talk at them. Involve them as much as possible. Encourage them to contribute by perhaps asking what their favourite meal is or where they like to shop.

Get them talking by asking questions like:

- Why do we need food? (helps keep you in good health, provides energy to enjoy life to the full, feel-good factor, protects against illness)
- What does healthy eating mean to you?
- What influences their food choices? (each group may have different priorities, e.g. income, availability of different foods, accessibility to shops)
- What health issues can be influenced by eating a healthy diet?

Introduce the Eatwell Plate

Follow on by introducing the Eatwell Plate. Explain that the aim of it is to understand and enjoy healthy eating.

Use poster versions of the Eatwell Plate or pull-up (if you have one) while talking through the various points.

Refer to the Food Standards Agency leaflet *Your Guide to the Eatwell Plate: Helping You Eat a Healthier Diet*: this is useful information for you but perhaps more detailed than your participants need.

Points to emphasise:

- We need a variety – no single food provides us with all the nutrients our body needs.

- There's no need to sacrifice – it's the balance that's important. It's eating more of some foods and less of others, and some foods more often and other foods less often.
- Remember snacks count.
- Control the size of your portions.
- Different people need different levels of energy.
- It's important to start the day with breakfast.

Gastronomic game

Use the Gastronomic game to reinforce these messages. The game helps to involve the group more and is great for discussion.

Ask the group to place the 'foods' in the appropriate sections. While they do this perhaps the group leader can organise tea and coffee.

The leader can then talk through items section by section.

This is a good chance to introduce basic label reading, perhaps highlighting the ingredients list on each item. But don't try to include too much about label reading at this stage – keep it simple, pointing out the order that ingredients come in (highest quantity first, then descending order).

If you are looking at an ingredients list with sugar, you could mention some of the other forms of added sugars that appear in ingredients lists – those ending in 'ose' (sucrose, maltose, glucose, fructose), hydrolysed starch, invert sugar, corn syrup, corn syrup etc.

The game will highlight the fact that some foods and meals etc don't fit into just one section but are composite foods – again an opportunity for group discussion. With composite foods encourage the group to think what the foods are made up from and talk about what might be the best ways to make these up or to make them into a meal. For example, sandwiches with thick slices of bread, thin slices of cheese or meat and plenty of salad vegetables are a balanced choice. Cottage pie with lean mince and plenty of vegetables added can have a thicker layer of potato on top and extra vegetables on the side. This means saving money too as less meat is needed.

Finishing the session

Before finishing it's a good idea to have some of the supporting resource leaflets available for clients to take home.

If further classes are planned, handing out a note of the dates with your contact details acts as a great reminder.

Finally mention that at the next session everyone will have their sleeves rolled up and will be cooking their own food to take home. You could discuss with group what their preference is, although we've found that it's better to start with soup for the first time.

Minestrone soup with garlic or herb bread

Munch Crunch 2 pages 10–16

Session plan

Set up hobs and equipment as detailed in the section on Preparing the venue for a cooking class.

Lay out ingredients using the Eatwell tabletop mat (see photo, *Munch Crunch 2*, page 10).

You may have held your induction session in a different place. If this is the first session in the venue, make clients feel comfortable with the surroundings. Point out the toilets, and explain fire drills and procedures and emergency exits. It may be necessary to familiarise them with using particular hobs, tabletop ovens etc.

Soups are not only very easy to make but can provide a cheap nutritious meal for all the family. This recipe offers lots of opportunities for adaptation depending on ingredients available. Once basic skills and confidence have been mastered, encourage clients to experiment at home with other vegetables, pulses etc.

If this is the first hands-on session with the group, it's a good idea to demonstrate the preparation and chopping of each vegetable as you go along. Even if some of the group know about this, others may not and they may feel awkward about asking.

It is important to keep everyone working step by step as a group. This makes it easier for you to keep control, to bring in relevant discussion points and to have everyone's attention. Some people will work more slowly or may require more help than others.

Points to make

Stock: If possible make up jugs of different stocks, e.g. vegetable stock cube and vegetable bouillon. Provide small disposable spoons and encourage clients to taste. Discuss their preferences. Some stocks may contain flavour enhancers (e.g. monosodium glutamate) and look a lot darker than others. Most will have a high salt content so it's important to point out that we don't need to add further salt. Group members will have different preferences, which is to be expected. Offer them a choice of stock for their own soup. Use the stock comparison for discussion.

Salt: You could mention that over the next few sessions the group will be working on reducing salt in prepared food. See the points about salt in the notes on healthy eating messages. You could also use a Traffic Light Salt game.

Ring the changes: Encourage clients to make soup again at home using their own choice of vegetables. Remember this can include fresh, frozen and tinned. They could try different pastas, pulses, or peeled chopped potatoes. To get clients talking, ask them for their own ideas – what would they have in their store cupboard that they could use or have in store for an emergency back up? They might have, for instance, potatoes, swede, mushrooms, sweetcorn, peppers, shredded cabbage, chopped lean bacon, lentils, or canned chickpeas or kidney beans.

Eatwell Plate: While the soup is cooking, look at where the ingredients used fit into the Eatwell Plate; explain that this is a balanced meal if eaten with some chunky bread. The group could also use grated cheese for a topping. Traditionally a little grated parmesan is used, but this can be an expensive item.

Bread: Talk about different sorts of bread. What sorts do the group buy? How much do they eat? Perhaps take along a variety of breads for them to try (wholegrain, granary, brown and white). Compare fibre content, price and preferences. Discuss the benefits refer to the notes on starchy foods in the healthy eating messages notes.

Garlic/herb bread: If you're making garlic/herb bread, highlight the benefits. It's cheaper, and you can make several at once (wrap in foil freeze; cook from frozen). Most ready-prepared versions have higher salt levels. Point out that you can reduce fat levels by using lower fat spread and less of it.

Blending: For a smooth soup you could demonstrate blitzing with a hand blender – an excellent way of disguising vegetables for fussy children or adults.

Compare with bought soup: Finish by making comparisons with bought tinned minestrone (cost and taste), again by using disposable teaspoons. Discuss the ingredients labels on the can with the group.

Storage and transport: Finally, make sure the soups are cooled sufficiently before putting into clean plastic containers (see the shopping list below). It may be necessary to provide suitable carrier bags for the group to transport their containers home. Some may have to push buggies or use public transport.

Food hygiene: Discuss storage of foods in the fridge, freezing and reheating, ensuring clients know how to store/reheat items prepared in class. Refer to the notes on food safety and hygiene.

Shopping list for session on minestrone soup

It is important to shop locally for each particular client group, using only shops they have access to or frequent.

Where possible buy stores' own brand – look for 'value', 'smart', 'simply' ranges.

For a class of 8

- vegetable oil
- 8 large onions
- 8 large carrots (16 if smaller)
- 8 sticks of celery (check bunch – usually 1 head is enough)
- 8 cans of chopped tomatoes
- 2 tins of beans, e.g. white haricot, cannellini
- 8 cups of other vegetables (useful to incorporate frozen mixed e.g. 1kg mixed frozen vegetables)
- 12oz dried pasta shells (take along different shapes and remember wholemeal varieties – offer choices)
- 2 tubes tomato puree
- black pepper (salt NOT required if using stock cubes/bouillon)
- mixed herbs
- vegetable stock cubes/bouillon powder, preferably low in sodium (both kinds for a comparison)
- parmesan or other cheese for topping (optional)

For garlic bread

If there's time, make some garlic bread.

roll of tin foil

4 baguettes (for 8 halves)
A little lower fat spread – look for 'lower fat' on the label
garlic (1 bulb)
mixed dried herbs

Accessories

Storage boxes: 8 lidded plastic food storage boxes (4 litre size). Buy supermarkets' own brand. Clients then keep their own box but are asked to bring it back for their own use in other subsequent sessions. It is advisable to keep a few spare boxes for taking food home in case clients forget.

Tea/coffee break or lunch: Buy something suitable for the break depending on the time of day. You will need milk, sugar, tea, coffee, perhaps pancakes/scones/tea bread or rolls and choice of fillings. This is an opportunity to introduce clients to different fruit etc.

What you do

The soup

- Peel and chop onion and carrot. Wash and chop celery.
- Add to saucepan with the oil and heat gently for about 10 minutes, stirring from time to time.
- Open the tomatoes and add to pot with the stock, beans and other vegetables.
- Bring to boil and add the pasta. Adjust heat to keep soup on a simmer rather than boiling hard. Cover with lid.
- Continue cooking for about 15 minutes or until veg and pasta are soft (test with a knife).
- Add puree and season with herbs and black pepper to taste (taste using a different spoon!)
- For a smooth soup whizz using a hand blender when cooled.

Garlic and herb bread

- Make slices across the baguette with a bread knife, but don't cut all the way through.
- Mix the butter, mixed herbs and garlic together in a small bowl. The clove of garlic can be either chopped finely or crushed using a garlic press.
- Spread the mixture on one side of each slice of the baguette.
- Wrap tightly in foil.
- It can be frozen at this stage for use later.
- Bake in a moderately hot oven 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6 for 15 minutes.
- When ready remove carefully, open up parcel, slice and serve.

A comparison of stock cubes and bouillon powder (2010)

	Supermarket own brand vegetable stock cubes	Vegetable bouillon e.g. Marigold Swiss bouillon
Capacity	Makes approx 5 litres	Makes 7.5 litres
To make a litre of stock	2 cubes make approx 1 litre	4 teaspoons (20g) makes 1 litre
Ingredients	Salt, flavour enhancers (monosodium glutamate, disodium inosinate), yeast extract, potato starch, hydrogenated vegetable fat, sugar, vegetables (carrots, leek, celery, onion), flavourings, colour (plain caramel), spices, herbs, antioxidant (butylated hydroxyanisole)	Sea salt, hydrolysed vegetable protein, potato starch, vegetable fat (sunflower), vegetables 8% (celery, onions, carrots, leeks), lactose, spices (turmeric, white pepper, garlic, mace, nutmeg), parsley and lovage
Sodium content	21.5g per 100g Equivalent to 10g salt per litre of made-up stock	17.7g per 100g Equivalent to 9g salt per litre of made-up stock
	<i>N.B. BOTH these are high in salt (1g sodium represents 2.5g salt) and therefore don't use any additional salt when using stocks. Aim for no more than 3-6g salt a day.</i>	

Chicken nuggets or fish dippers with potato wedges and dips

Munch Crunch 2 pages 17–26

Session plan

Set up ovens and tables. It is helpful to preheat the ovens before the session starts.

Welcome the group back and have a general chat about the previous session.

This session demonstrates how easy it is to make some children's favourites much healthier, and will look at the benefits. The dishes are popular with young families and teens.

Each member of the group can experience making several items in the time. It may be easier to make the dips as a demonstration at the end:

Set up the equipment required for each person.

It is a good idea to start with potato wedges as these take longest to cook.

While the potato wedges are cooking the group could prepare fish dippers and chicken nuggets.

Have small plastic pots with lids available for dips so the group can take samples home, with clear instructions to refrigerate them as soon as possible and to use them within 24 hours.

Potato wedges

Points to make

Benefits of oven cooked wedges:

- children love them,
- easy to prepare,
- cheap,
- you can control additives and how much oil/fat is used,
- very much safer than using a deep fat fryer.

Potato varieties: Discuss the different varieties of potatoes: most will be suitable for this recipe. It isn't necessary to buy the large baking potatoes as these can be much more expensive. Generally supermarkets' own value bags of potatoes will do.

Storing potatoes: Chat about how to store potatoes correctly; in a cool dark place and not the fridge.

Storing potatoes in the fridge can increase the sugar level they contain. This can lead to higher levels of a potentially harmful chemical called acrylamide when potatoes are baked, roasted or fried at very high temperatures.

It's advisable not to eat green, damaged or sprouted parts of potatoes. These can contain high levels of a natural toxin called glycoalkaloids. If potatoes still taste bitter after removing these bits it's better not to eat them. Really high levels of glycoalkaloids can upset the digestive system.

Chips vs wedges: After getting the group to scrub the bag of potatoes, using two potatoes the same size cut one up into 6–8 wedges and the other into very thin chips. Use this to demonstrate the difference in surface area; point out that the thin chips have more surface area to soak up oil, and therefore larger chips and wedges are the better, lower fat choice.

Avoid salt: Have a variety of seasonings available as alternatives to salt.

What you do

Give each member 2 or 3 potatoes and a non stick baking tray and then they can follow these steps.

- Scrub the potatoes and remove any skin blemishes.
- Cut the potatoes into half lengthways, then into wedges (around 6–8 wedges per potato).
- Mix the oil, flavourings and potato wedges in a bowl or put in a clean plastic bag and shake.
- Take the potato wedges out of the bag and place on an oven tray.
- Bake in a hot oven 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6 for 25–30 minutes.
- Test to see if ready using the point of a knife in one of the wedges. They should feel soft in the middle.

Fish dippers

Points to make

Resistance to fish: This recipe can be used to encourage reluctant members of the group to at least taste and try fish. If they are negative at first, don't be put off. Explore the possible barriers: it may be fear of bones, the feel or smell of fish, or lack of skills or opportunity. Fresh fish shouldn't smell.

If people are still unwilling to participate it may still be worth preparing some different fish fillets as a demo. Usually once it's cooked some people will at least try a taste.

Types of fish: Thicker boneless fillets of salmon, cod or haddock work well. As fresh fish is often expensive, source frozen fillets and defrost them overnight in the fridge first.

Breadcrumbs: For a larger group it is often more convenient to prepare breadcrumbs before the session. But remember to explain how you made them, and that it is a good way of using up staler bread. Having a bag of crumbs in the freezer is handy as it can be used for coating fish and chicken as well as toppings for pasta and other dishes, perhaps mixed through with a little grated cheese.

Try mixing different herbs, e.g. chopped parsley, or grated lemon zest with the breadcrumbs.

What you do

Follow these steps, giving each member a baking tray for their own dippers and making sure it is greased lightly using kitchen paper with a little oil to prevent sticking. Keeping fish dippers to one end of their tray will leave space for some chicken nuggets.

See *Munch Crunch 2*, page 17 for photos of coating bowls. It may be necessary for the group to work in twos and share.

- Heat the oven to 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6 and grease a baking tray.

- Put the egg, flour and breadcrumbs into 3 separate bowls/plates.
- Cut the fish into small strips and dip into the flour, then the egg and finally the breadcrumbs.
- Put the coated fish strips on the greased baking tray.
- Cook in the heated oven for 12–15 minutes, turning halfway through, until golden brown.

Chicken nuggets

Points to make

Cross-contamination: Have members of group thoroughly wash their board, knife and hands after handling the fish. It will also be necessary to replace the coating bowls of flour, beaten egg and breadcrumbs with clean bowls and ingredients before starting this second phase if doing both fish and chicken.

Cooking times: Make sure oven gloves are used and supervise use of ovens. Cooking time will depend on how accurate the ovens are and the thickness of the chicken nuggets and fish dippers. The session leader should check after 10 minutes, when food could be turned over. As a rough guide the fish dippers will cook in half the time, so can be removed using a fish slice. Fish will be opaque in middle when cooked. Check the chicken using a knife – it should cut easily and be white all the way through with no traces of pink.

Transport and storage: Follow the Food safety and hygiene notes as detailed if the group are taking food home.

What you do

Follow the steps below.

When they're prepared place the chicken nuggets on the other half of baking trays then bake.

- Turn the oven to heat 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6.
- Cut the chicken into chunks (4 or 5 for a child).
- Spread the flour out on a plate and roll the chicken first into the egg and then into the breadcrumbs.
- Place on a well-greased baking tray.
- Bake in a hot oven for 20 minutes, turning over after 10 minutes.

Dips

Ready-prepared ones can be expensive are often high in fat, sugar and salt.

These dips can be made as a demo, perhaps while group are enjoying a tea break.

Take along a hand blender which can be used to puree the tomato dip as an alternative to ketchup. It makes it more appealing for children but without the added sugar that's found in commercial brands.

A variety of spices and herbs could be added to the basic tomato sauce, e.g. chilli powder or fresh chopped chillies, parsley or mixed herbs.

Dairy-based alternatives: add cheese, chives, spring onions, garlic, chopped smoked salmon or avocado to natural yoghurt. Any of these could be pureed using the hand blender.

What you do

Tomato sauce

- Chop the onion and garlic and put into a saucepan together with the tinned tomatoes.
- Rinse out the can with a little cold water (about half a can). Add to the saucepan then stir in the tomato puree.
- Bring to the boil and simmer for about 10–15 minutes until onion is soft.
- For a smooth sauce whizz with a hand blender for a few minutes.

Dairy-based dip

- Grate the cheese.
- Wash and finely chop the spring onions.
- Add to the yoghurt and mix well.

Shopping list for session on chicken nuggets, fish dippers, potato wedges and dips

For a class of 8

Potato wedges

2.5kg bag medium sized potatoes suitable for baking (e.g. Maris Piper, King Edward, Red Rooster) (2–3 potatoes per group member)
vegetable oil
variety of dried herbs and spices e.g. mixed herbs, barbecue seasoning, chilli powder
1 bulb garlic
roll of plastic bags (medium)

Fish dippers

8 fish fillets (approx 125g each, 1 per group member) (fresh or frozen, but allow frozen to defrost in fridge before class)
4 eggs
bag plain flour (only a few spoonfuls required for coating)
breadcrumbs*
a little vegetable/sunflower oil for greasing trays

* 4 slices of bread – wholemeal is a nice alternative – will give 200g of crumbs. It's better to have extra as it can always be frozen if not used. Commercially produced natural or coloured breadcrumbs are available in supermarkets: they're more expensive and often have other additives, but worth taking along as a comparison.

Chicken nuggets

8 skinless chicken breast fillets, 1 per group member
bag plain flour (only a few spoonfuls required for coating)
4 eggs
breadcrumbs (as above)
a little vegetable/sunflower oil for greasing trays

Dips (as a demonstration for the group)

Tomato sauce

400g can chopped tomatoes (supermarkets' own saver brands ideal)
1/3 tube tomato puree
1 medium onion
1 clove garlic
1/2 can water

Dairy-based dip

small pot natural yoghurt
1 or 2 spring onions (or chives if available)
50g mature cheddar cheese, grated

Accessories

Baking trays (1 per person)
Lidded pots for dip

Coleslaw, jacket potatoes, fillings and lunchtime snacks

Munch Crunch 2 pages 27–30

Session plan

Set up equipment and tables.

As a session on coleslaw can be done in half a session, it's often a good idea to combine it with something else, e.g. jacket potatoes and perhaps filled baguettes. If you're going to bake potatoes, you'll need to first set up the tabletop ovens and have them preheated for the start of the session.

For making coleslaw, each person will need a plastic bowl, chopping board, Y shaped peeler, grater, small bowl for mixing dressing with a spoon and a fork, and a clean plastic tub to store and carry their coleslaw home in.

Wash apples prior to start of session and have them ready.

Lay out the ingredients using the tabletop Eatwell mat (see photo, *Munch Crunch 2*, page 27).

After welcoming the group back, chat about the previous session and answer any questions they may have.

This session looks at a variety of fillings suitable for jacket potatoes, baguettes and sandwiches – all ideas for a light lunch.

Points to make

Bake several potatoes together: Source the best value buys. Often supermarkets package baking potatoes in fours, which are quite cheaply priced. If you can find these, it's worth giving each member of the group at least 4 to bake, to demonstrate that it's more cost effective to bake several at once. Even if only one will be used at the time, the remainder can be chilled, covered, refrigerated and reheated in a microwave the next day or used as the basis of another dish.

For example: add chopped cooked jacket potatoes to some finely chopped onion, a clove of garlic and some finely chopped bacon, pour over a can of chopped tomatoes, top with grated cheese and cook in a preheated medium hot oven for 30–35minutes or until cooked through.

Ideas for fillings: Take along a variety of convenience foods suitable for fillings to discuss with the group, e.g. canned baked beans, canned chilli con carne, cans of tuna and sweetcorn, cheese for grating and perhaps some ready-made coleslaw. Look at the ingredients and note the cost at the time of purchase. Don't dismiss canned foods because they may have added salt or sugar, as these are often cheaper and can be important store cupboard items. Instead look to see if they could be drained and rinsed under running water using a sieve e.g. canned beans, sweetcorn.

Storing potatoes: While the group are scrubbing their potatoes, chat about correct storage of potatoes – in a cool dark place but not the fridge. Storing potatoes in the fridge can increase the sugar level they contain, which could lead to higher levels of a chemical called acrylamide that is potentially harmful when potatoes are baked at high temperatures.

It also advisable not to eat any parts of potatoes that are green, damaged, or sprouted. These can contain high levels of a natural toxin called glycoalkaloids. If potatoes still taste bitter after removing these bits it is better not to eat them. Really high levels of glycoalkaloids can upset digestive system.

Storing cooked baked potatoes: Cooked jacket potatoes should be covered when cold and stored in the fridge at home for maximum of 2 days. They should be reheated (piping hot) in the microwave. Ensure everyone understands what to do before they leave.

Compare ingredients: Have a shop-bought coleslaw to hand and compare ingredients – most only contain cabbage, carrot and onion in a lot of sauce. This recipe aims at increasing vegetable and fruit intake and even if they're not initially keen most people have found it delicious.

Shredding: You don't need food processors for this recipe, just regular Y peelers which are great for shredding the cabbage and red onion.

Food safety: As there is no cooking involved (which usually kills off most bacteria), stress the importance of good personal hygiene – see the food safety and hygiene notes. Give each person a fork to mix through the ingredients to avoid using their hands in the bowl.

Low fat: Buy lower fat mayonnaise and mix it equally with natural yoghurt to lower the fat content and make this a really healthy coleslaw. Use just enough of this mayo and yoghurt mix to lightly bind the coleslaw and don't have it swimming! You should be able to clearly see all the different fruit and vegetables in it!

Taking it home: When the coleslaw's ready, put it into clean plastic tubs with lids, and make sure everyone understands what to do when they reach home.

Lunchtime snacks: You can use the lunch or tea break to sample the coleslaw the group will have just made. Encourage them to make up a filled roll and add some of their own coleslaw. In our experience, even the most reticent will find this really enjoyable. They'll be surprised at the quantity this recipe yields (compare this with a ready-made tub).

Why make your own coleslaw? Discuss the benefits of making your own:

- cheap,
- counts towards 5 a day,
- healthier,
- a good filling for sandwiches, rolls, burgers and jacket potatoes,
- a good alternative to salad vegetables which are often more expensive and affected by seasonal fluctuations,
- easy to vary – see if anyone has any ideas of other ingredients they could use.

The importance of having lunch: Use this opportunity to talk about other light meals the group might have at lunchtime. Stress the importance of not skipping meals – it's a common misconception to think you can lose weight by doing so. It's important to eat regular meals throughout the day, especially if bringing up children: it sets an example and encourages a healthy routine, so they're less likely to snack later on foods that are perhaps high in sugar and saturated fat. Use the Eatwell Plate to give some ideas for healthy balanced lunches.

Light lunch ideas could be as simple as:

- filled baguette or sandwich,
- scrambled egg on a roll or toast, or a small omelette,
- boiled egg with bread and butter,
- banana on toast,
- baked beans on toast with cheese,

- soup with bread or roll,
- jacket potato with filling,
- any of above accompanied by glass of fruit juice or portion of fruit or a yoghurt.

Next week's class: Before finishing find out what group would like to cook next week.

Shopping list for session on coleslaw, jacket potatoes and fillings

For a class of 8

Jacket potatoes

8 packets of 4 (if possible) baking potatoes

For discussion:

- 1 can baked beans
- 1 can chilli con carne
- 1 can sweetcorn
- 1 can tuna

Coleslaw

- 2 large white cabbages (sometimes small ones are available) –approx 450g per person
- 8 large or 16 small carrots
- 8 green eating apples
- 8 large oranges or 16 easy peel satsumas/tangerines
- 4 large red onions
- 2 bunches spring onions
- 1 bottle lemon juice (a dash each)
- 2 medium sized jars of low fat mayonnaise (buying 2 smaller ones can reduce waste if not opened)
- 2 x 500g pot natural yoghurt
- sultanas or raisins (optional)
- sunflower seeds or unsalted nuts (optional)

Tea break/lunch (using coleslaw as a filling)

- 8 crusty rolls
- packet lean cooked ham
- small piece of cheese for grating
- milk for tea
- pure juice

What you do

Baked potatoes

- Scrub over the potatoes and prick them with a fork.
- Place the potatoes on a baking tray (one between two if cooking 4 potatoes each. Place in heated ovens with care (oven gloves!)).
- Bake for about 25 minutes depending on size, and check by testing with a fork.

- Continue to bake until soft when tested with a fork, usually another 15 minutes.
- Eat when cooked, adding hot or cold fillings of choice.

Coleslaw

- Remove the outside leaves of the cabbage and shred finely using a small Y peeler. Place in a large mixing bowl.
- Scrub or peel the carrots, then grate and add to the bowl.
- Remove outer skin from the red onion and chop finely using a Y peeler, and add to bowl.
- Mix ingredients with a fork.
- Wash, then quarter apple and remove core. Chop into small pieces and sprinkle with a little lemon juice to prevent the apple turning brown on contact with the air. This can be done in a small bowl or cup before mixing into rest of ingredients.
- Peel and segment the orange, catching any juice, and add both to bowl.
- Remove any damaged skin from spring onions, chop finely, wash and dry before adding to the bowl.
- Mix together the mayonnaise and yoghurt in a separate bowl before stirring into the other ingredients.
- Mix to combine all the ingredients.

Pizzas (scone based and quick pizzas)

Munch Crunch 2 pages 31–35

Session plan

Set up equipment and cookers.

Welcome the group and find out what they thought of the dish they prepared last time.

Introduce this session – the group will be making their own pizza to take home, as well as a quick pizza to enjoy with a cuppa in the break.

Points to make

Bought pizzas: Ask the group what kind of pizzas they buy and whether they think that they are healthy choices. Why? Thinking about the Eatwell Plate, what could they eat with the bought pizza to make it a healthier meal?

Chat about the difference types of pizza base – stone crust, scone based or deep pan – and also stuffed crust. What are the differences? Some will have more fat than others and will also be high in salt.

A good idea is to take along a frozen pizza to support discussion:

- How much sauce and topping is there?
- Does it look like the picture?
- Look at the label. What are the main ingredients?
- It may be a ham and pineapple pizza but how much ham is actually used?
- How much salt is in it?
- How could this pizza be made healthier? Ask for suggestions – hopefully someone will suggest adding extra vegetables, for instance.

Choosing ingredients: Arrange the ingredients using the tabletop mat. What do you have most of? The group should notice that you have lots of different vegetables.

Have a selection of leaner cooked meats, cheese (keep in cool bag until required) and canned tuna available, so people can use their favourite toppings and perhaps they can try something new.

Encourage the use of strongly flavoured cheese – you get more taste from less cheese, so it's lower in fat.

The benefits of making your own pizza base:

- you can make it healthier by using wholemeal flour, and not adding salt,
- you can add other flavourings,
- it's cheaper than ready-made versions.

Flour: Take along a choice of flours and encourage using wholemeal or at least a mixture of wholemeal and white. Mention the milling of flour – the most commonly used ones used are wheat based. Wholemeal is made from 100% whole grain, brown flour contains about 85% of the original grain and white flour is made from the central section of the grain only. Some brown flours contain caramel for colouring – check the label for the word 'wholemeal'!

Why wholegrain?

- Most of the popular cereal foods we eat are refined but it's recommended that we all eat more wholegrain foods as part of a healthy diet.
- Wholegrains are an excellent source of a whole range of beneficial nutrients as well as providing both soluble and insoluble fibres.
- Wholegrains are absorbed more slowly and prevent rapid rise in blood sugar levels – they may help with feeling fuller longer and reduce the need to snack.
- Soluble fibre can help prevent heart disease, as it's known to help lower blood cholesterol levels (LDL), and it can help in the control of type 2 diabetes.
- Insoluble fibres are important in keeping the bowel healthy.

Making the pizza

The base: Start by making the scone base, following the steps in 'What to do' below.

Using mature cheddar cheese means less is needed to give maximum taste.

The base can be shaped with the palms of the hands for a practical reason only – we prefer to pat out the mixture to fill a rectangular baking tray. Not only does this maximise the available surface area for adding toppings but we can fit two of these trays into the tabletop ovens at once.

While precooking the base as instructed in the recipe, work through the various vegetables you have taken along and get the group to wash peel, chop and prepare these ready for use. Giving each person a large plate to place their prepared ingredients on as they work keeps their boards free to prepare on.

While you're doing this remember to keep an eye on the bases that will be baking in the ovens. They only need 5–10 minutes, just enough for the base to shrink from the edges on the tray and be lightly coloured.

The sauce: Make the sauce as per the recipe. It's probably more practical in terms of dishes required etc. if the group works in pairs (one can of chopped tomatoes will make enough sauce to cover two pizza bases of this size). Make an extra batch up for the quick pizzas.

Discuss the benefits of making your own sauce. It's much cheaper. And many of the ready-prepared pizza sauces have hidden salt and sugars. You can add herbs for flavouring – discuss the options.

Before the group start putting together their own pizzas get them to prepare a quick pizza. This can be baked first and they can enjoy it in the tea break while their own are baking.

Quick pizzas: Use ciabatta rolls halved, or try French bread or small pitta breads. Give each person half a ciabatta roll and spread with the extra sauce you prepared. Bring out the chilled toppings and ask the group to prepare this quick pizza with the ones they prefer because once it's cooked they'll get to eat it with their cuppa.

Cook these while they move on to assemble their own pizzas. Encourage the group to use the different toppings. Perhaps suggesting trying different toppings on sections of their pizza. Finish off with sprinkling cheese on top before baking. With some groups who are reluctant to try new vegetables you could try the competitive approach. Who can use all the ingredients chopped up on their plate? Or produce the best designed pizza?

Taking them home: When the pizzas are cooked allow them to cool slightly before trying to transfer them to boxes for taking home. There is a technique for this: loosen the pizza off and

using two fish slices lever up one edge, align with opened pizza box and then gently shake the pizza off the tray into the box.

Make sure the group understand what to do with their pizza when they get home. Refrigerate them if not using immediately. They can be reheated and should be eaten within 24 hours.

Shopping list for session on pizza

For a class of 8

For the bases

plain flour: 1kg bag of wholemeal and 2 bags of white (better to have spare)
2 tins baking powder
1 x 750g soft margarine (suitable for baking)
1.2kg mature/strong cheddar cheese for base and top (120g each, plus extra for quick pizzas)
1 litre semi-skimmed milk (approx 100ml each)
6 cans chopped tomatoes
4 tubes tomato puree
mixed herbs
4–5 ciabatta rolls (halved – for quick pizzas) or French bread

For toppings

a variety of leaner cooked meats, e.g.
1 x 400g wafer thin cooked ham
1 x 200g wafer thin cooked chicken
4 small tins tuna
a variety of suitable vegetables/fruit, e.g.
3–4 small courgettes
8 mixed peppers (2 x ½ each and can swap colours)
8 tomatoes for slicing
1 medium can sweetcorn
1 can medium pineapple chunks in juice
1 box mushrooms (12–16)
8 small red onions
black pepper

Accessories

8 carry-home pizza boxes (12" for this recipe). These can be purchased or kindly given either from your friendly local takeaway (as we often do!) or from a cash and carry.

Tea break: the group will have made a quick pizza for this but remember to buy juice/tea/coffee/extra milk etc.

What you do

The base

- Put on the oven to heat to 230°C/450°F/gas mark 8.
- Grease and flour a baking tray.
- Measure out 1 cup of white plain flour and half a cup of wholemeal flour into a mixing bowl.
- Add 2 teaspoons of baking powder to the bowl and stir to mix evenly.
- Add 3 level dessertspoons of soft margarine to the bowl and rub in using the fingertips until the mixture looks crumbly.
- Grate some cheddar cheese (you will need about 120g altogether – put a small handful into the bowl, keeping the rest to top your pizza later).
- Mix with a fork and then make a small well in the middle, add a little milk slowly (about a quarter cup). Gradually mix with the fork until a soft ball of dough is formed. Take care: add the milk a little at a time otherwise the dough will become too sticky.
- Tip the dough out onto the baking tray and use the palm of your hand to pat out into a circle or to fill the whole tray.
- Bake this for 5 minutes in the heated oven, then remove carefully using oven gloves.

Toppings

- Make the tomato sauce by emptying half a can of chopped tomatoes (200g) into a bowl and mixing in a quarter of a tube of tomato puree with a fork. Try adding a sprinkle of dried mixed herbs and some pepper to taste.
- Try using different toppings on different parts of your base:
 - wafer thin ham, pineapple, cooked chicken, tuna,
 - chopped red onion, peppers, mushrooms, tomatoes, tinned sweetcorn, courgettes.
- Finally top with remainder of grated cheese.
- Bake on the top shelf of the oven for 12–15 minutes until the cheese is melted and the vegetables are cooked.
- carefully take the pizza out of the oven and cut into wedges.

Very quick one-pot pasta

Munch Crunch 2 pages 37–39

Session plan

This particular recipe was devised following requests from mums looking for simple but quick ideas to encourage toddlers and children to eat vegetables.

Although this recipe uses frozen vegetables for convenience, finely diced fresh vegetables could easily be substituted.

Set up equipment as required.

Introduce the session. If this is a first session on toddler feeding, begin with a discussion around suitable foods for toddlers. Talk about their dietary requirements and how their diet should differ.

Points to make

Toddlers are usually very active and are growing very quickly, so they require small regular meals and snacks, which should be healthy and varied and include foods from each of the four main food groups from the Eatwell Plate.

Toddlers have smaller tummies so can't eat large amounts of food at one go. So they need small amounts of foods and snacks that are high in nutrients e.g. full fat milk and dairy foods, meat, and eggs.

A variety of fruit and vegetables and starchy foods should also be included.

In young children it is important to avoid too many high fibre foods such as a lot of wholemeal pasta and brown rice as their stomachs can't cope with them in large quantities. Also, a diet too high in fibre can reduce the absorption of minerals such as calcium and iron.

Sugary drinks: Sweet drinks such as sugary fizzy drinks and fruit squash are not suitable for young children because they cause tooth decay. But if you do use fruit squash or sugary drinks, make sure they're very well diluted with water and drunk at mealtimes. Between meals, promote water or milk to drink (milk should be full fat).

Baby bottles: By this stage toddlers should be drinking from a free-flow cup. Inappropriate use of baby bottles can lead to serious dental problems and also can delay speech.

Foods that should be avoided:

- Raw eggs and food that contains raw or partially cooked eggs, because of the risk of salmonella, which causes food poisoning. Make sure eggs are cooked until both the white and yolk are solid.
- Salt – there's no need to add salt to toddlers' food. Between the ages of 1 and 3, children should be having no more than 2g a day. Check labels; if buying processed foods, especially those aimed at children, choose those with low salt levels.
- Sugar or honey – don't add these to food for toddlers.
- Whole or chopped nuts for children under 5, because of the risk of choking. It's a good idea to crush or flake nuts instead. Unless the child has a food allergy or eczema it is not necessary to avoid peanuts, but care should be taken when giving them for the first time if there are allergies in the immediate family – parents, brothers or sisters.

- Shark, swordfish and marlin, because these fish contain relatively high levels of mercury, which might affect a child's developing nervous system
- Tea or coffee isn't suitable and shouldn't be given to young children, especially not at meal times, because this reduces the amount of iron they can absorb.

Ingredients: Using the Eatwell tabletop mat discuss the ingredients taken along to the session.

There's no need to defrost frozen vegetables prior to cooking.

Encourage group to take time to chop fresh vegetables smaller than usual.

Have a variety of different pasta shapes available (possible to find ones more appealing to young children, animal, car, alphabet shapes.)

Encouraging children to eat: Use the time while vegetables and pasta are cooking to start a group discussion about ways to encourage young children to eat:

- family meal times, sitting at a table together,
- not making meal times an issue if introducing something new. New foods may need to be offered on several different occasions before they are eaten. Just keep gently offering them,
- lead by example – children will mimic adults,
- use child friendly placemats, appealing crockery and their own cutlery,
- don't serve too large a portion.

Yoghurt: As this recipe is quick, this session could be linked with another activity, perhaps looking at yoghurts. Group could experiment blending or mixing different chopped fruits (fresh and canned) with natural yoghurt. Benefits: cheaper, higher fruit content, no added sugars or sweeteners.

Shopping list for session on very quick one-pot pasta

For a class of 8:

8 onions
 4 tubes tomato puree
 2½kg frozen mixed small vegetables (e.g. peas, carrots, sweetcorn)
 8 vegetable stock cubes or tin of vegetable bouillon powder
 vegetable oil
 8 x 200g cans baked beans (check label for salt, sugar)
 400g mature cheddar for grating (50g each)
 1.4kg small pasta shapes – take along a variety to allow some choice (will need 175g each)

Yoghurt activity

selection of canned and fresh fruit for chopping
 large 1kg tub or 8 x 125g pots natural yoghurt (supermarkets' own brand tend to be cheaper)
 samples of different fruit yoghurts for comparison (full fat, light, fruit corners etc.)

Accessories

Make sure the group have suitable containers for taking the pasta home.

A couple of hand blenders and plastic jugs will be useful.

Small lidded plastic pots for group to take yoghurt home.

Plastic teaspoons to encourage tasting.

Tea/coffee break – remember milk, tea, coffee, juice, and something to eat.

What you do

- Add vegetable oil to saucepan.
- Peel and finely chop onion.
- Add to saucepan and cook gently for a few minutes on medium heat, stirring, being careful not to burn the onion.
- Add the hot vegetable stock with the tomato puree.
- Add the pasta shapes and frozen vegetables.
- Cover the saucepan with a lid and simmer for about 15 minutes, until pasta and vegetables are soft when tested with a fork.
- Finally, add the contents of the can of baked beans, stir and continue cooking until heated through.
- Serve in bowls with a little grated cheese.

Cauliflower bake

Munch Crunch 2 pages 40–45

Session plan

Set up tabletop ovens and equipment.

Lay out ingredients using the tabletop mat see photo, *Munch Crunch 2*, page 40).

Unless this is the first hands-on session of the course, start off by asking clients for feedback from the previous session. What response did they get at home? Have they tried to make the recipe again?

Introduce this session, which will demonstrate how easy it is to make a quick and healthy meal with vegetables using only one saucepan – less washing up! The basic recipe is for cauliflower cheese bulked out with lots of different vegetables, and it's one they can easily vary at home.

Start by looking at the ingredients on the mat. Highlight the fact that you have a selection of fresh, frozen and canned vegetables (see healthy eating messages) and that people can make their own selection. But always encourage them to use a variety and perhaps to try unfamiliar ones.

Follow the instructions as per recipe book.

Points to make

Adding flavour: Simmering the chopped onion and carrot first in a little water adds flavour, reducing need for other flavour enhancers like salt.

Preparing cauliflower: It's probably a good idea to demonstrate how to prepare cauliflower. Try to buy smaller ones so clients can experience handling their own. In our experience, clients need to be shown that most of the cauliflower can be used, including the green leafy and stalk parts. Encourage them not to discard so much. Remind them about washing it carefully.

Cooking cauliflower: Discuss steaming rather than boiling, the need for a low heat and a lid, and the importance of keeping an eye on the water level in the pan so it doesn't boil dry. As the client will probably reheat the dish later at home, it's better to remove the cauliflower with a bit of bite to it. At this stage portion the cauliflower into small individual dishes if for one serving, or a larger ovenproof dish. Large slotted spoons are good to use for this. Don't worry if there are onions and carrots left in the liquid in the saucepan as this will be used to make the sauce.

Low fat: When preparing the sauce and grating the cheese, explain why you are using smaller amount of a stronger cheese – you need to use less to achieve flavour. The alternative is to use lower fat cheddar. Most cheeses are high in fat and a portion size is no bigger than a small matchbox. For sandwiches, grating the cheese first means you use less.

The cheese sauce is made using cornflour which is much healthier than the traditional method using a roux made from saturated fats.

Point out you are using lower fat milk – semi-skimmed.

Less seasoning: Limit seasoning to ground black pepper, though a dash of lemon juice added to the cauliflower at the beginning of steaming enhances the flavour.

Try to discourage the addition of salt – it's best not to have any available. There is plenty of salt in cheese.

Garlic could also be used for flavouring.

Taste and compare: Encourage tasting throughout cooking. Remember your supply of plastic spoons.

Top it off: Top with breadcrumbs (wholegrain if possible) if available, or crushed cornflakes, mixed with a little grated cheese, and finish with sliced tomatoes. Point out they can use up older bread for making breadcrumbs (see *Munch Crunch 2*, page 45).

Benefits of this dish: It's healthy, quick, cheap (take along costs), easy, uses only one pot, can make several portions that can be frozen for convenience for another day, easily varied.

Variations: Discuss possible variations:

- use a combination of cauliflower and broccoli
- add pulses – lentils, beans, chickpeas – or frozen mixed vegetables
- instead of cheese, flavour sauce with chopped fresh parsley
- use this sauce with macaroni and other pastas instead of cauliflower.

A complete meal: Make this a complete meal by serving with bread, potatoes or pasta.

Storage and baking: Finally ensure everyone understands how to store the dish correctly until they are ready to bake it. Give out instructions for oven baking (see *Munch Crunch 2*, page 45).

Shopping list for cauliflower bake

For a class of 8

8 whole cauliflowers
8 large onions
8 large carrots
4 leeks (½ each)
1 or 2 heads of broccoli
selection of canned vegetables e.g. sweetcorn (enough to give everyone a spoonful)
500g bag of frozen vegetables e.g. peas or beans
4 red peppers (½ each)
8 large tomatoes for slicing on top
semi-skimmed milk: minimum 2.4 litres (300ml each) (buy a little extra for the tea/coffee break)
1 packet cornflour (2 teaspoons each)
jar grain mustard
black pepper
1kg mature cheddar cheese (125g each)
cornflakes/breadcrumbs for topping

Accessories

8 basic medium sized ovenproof dishes (see photos, *Munch Crunch 2*, pages 44 and 73). If clients have already been given these, keep one or two in reserve as someone will at some stage forget to bring it back in!)

Provisions for the tea/coffee or lunch break.

What you do

- Chop onion and carrot and add to saucepan with about a mug of cold water and bring to the boil.
- Simmer for a few minutes before adding the cauliflower which has been trimmed, washed and broken up into small florets (remove thick stalk and outside leaves, keeping any undamaged inner leaves).
- Cover saucepan with lid, allowing the cauliflower to steam gently. (Keep an eye on the saucepan to make sure it doesn't boil dry. If necessary add a little more water.)
- Wash and chop the leek and red pepper if using and keep aside.
- While the cauliflower is cooking mix the cornflour in a teacup with a little of the milk.
- Grate the cheese.
- Test the cauliflower with a knife to check if it's ready. It should be tender. Carefully place the cauliflower pieces, onion and carrot in an ovenproof dish with a slotted spoon.
- Layer the chopped leeks, peppers and any other vegetables on top of the cauliflower. (If using frozen these can be added to the milk in the pan and cooked in the sauce.)
- Boil remaining liquid in saucepan until only a spoonful left and then add the milk and bring back to the boil. Remove from the heat and pour a little milk onto the cornflour paste, stirring until smooth.
- Pour the cornflour paste into the saucepan and return to the heat, stirring all the time with a wooden spoon until the mixture boils and thickens.
- Remove from the heat and stir in half the cheese and the mustard. Season with black pepper, and taste.
- Pour sauce over the cauliflower and vegetables and top with sliced tomatoes and the remaining cheese mixed together with the breadcrumbs or crushed cornflakes.
- Bake in a heated oven 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4 for 30–35 minutes until bubbling and the top is golden.

Chicken curry with rice and raita (and vegetable curry option)

Munch Crunch 2 pages 60–65 (and 47–49)

Session plan

Set up equipment and tables.

Lay out the ingredients for the session using the tabletop mat (see photo, *Munch Crunch 2*, page 60).

Welcome the group and chat about the previous session. Was the food taken home enjoyed? Has anyone tried to make it again?

Introduce this session – a really easy recipe based on a favourite dish, low in fat.

Using the tabletop mat discuss ingredients in relation to the Eatwell Plate. Give each client a single chicken breast, and aim to encourage incorporation of more vegetables into the recipe. If possible it's a good idea to have someone make the vegetarian version at the same time.

Advantages of adding more vegetables:

- Bulks the meal out – it goes further and requires less of the expensive meat
- Achieves a healthier balance
- Quick and convenient – saves using another saucepan to cook vegetables.

Follow the instructions (see 'What to do' below), demonstrating preparation techniques as required. Working through each stage as a group will prevent those less skilled from perhaps dropping out or feeling uncomfortable. Gradually those more adept will support those less confident – though it's important to maintain control throughout to prevent accidents.

Points to make

Cross-contamination: When handing out the chicken portions discuss cross-contamination. Give examples that might happen in the home. Perhaps the door bell or phone goes when you're handling raw chicken. What are the potential risks? What should you do?

Make sure everyone thoroughly washes their own chopping board, knife and hands with hot soapy water before continuing. Have detergent and scrubbing brushes readily available. Check that hot water is available at the start of session: many venues use time clocks.

Curry powder: Offer group members a choice. Medium will suit most tastes, but some may prefer hot while those less sure should be offered mild.

Salt: This is already present in both the stock and the curry powder and therefore no additional seasoning is required.

Rice: While curries are cooking this is usually a good time for a tea/coffee break and an opportunity to discuss cooking rice. It's often more convenient (insufficient hobs/pots) to cook rice in one large batch, cool well then portion out. Many are unfamiliar with brown rice so an idea is to cook a batch with half white, half brown. Point out that brown rice takes roughly double the time to cook.

It is very important to demonstrate and explain the reason for washing uncooked rice using a sieve and cold running water. This is to remove dust. Rice can contain spores of bacteria (*bacillus cereus*) that can cause food poisoning. These spores can germinate into bacteria if

rice is cooked and then left at room temperature for a time, resulting in high levels of bacteria which when eaten would result in vomiting and diarrhoea.

If cooked rice is not being eaten straight away it must be cooled quickly under cold running water and then drained. It should be covered and kept refrigerated (below 5°C) for a maximum of one day.

Rice should only ever be reheated once, and it must be reheated thoroughly to at least 63°C. Emphasise that portions of rice from takeaway outlets will have been reheated at the time of collection and therefore should be eaten at once. Leftover rice from takeaways should **never** be kept to be eaten later: this is a common cause of food poisoning.

Stress the importance of clean equipment and good hand hygiene when dealing with rice.

If time is short the group could be given rice to cook at home along with clear instructions.

Taste the difference: When the curries are ready encourage the group to sample each others' as each one will be different (give out several plastic teaspoons for this – don't be surprised at having to explain the need for a clean spoon for each tasting!). Ask for comments. Some may notice that they have made more because they added more vegetables etc.

Talk through variations using this recipe as a base; encourage suggestions from the group.

Taking it home: When organising curry for taking home discuss chilling, storage, reheating and when to use it by. It can be helpful in some cases to reinforce this information with written instructions.

Accompaniments

Naan and other bread: Traditionally curries are eaten with naan bread, but encourage a variety of bread/rolls (wholemeal is best) for a balanced meal. Ideally provide some naan bread for people to enjoy with their curry.

Raita: A traditional cooling and refreshing dip served with very hot curries. This can be made as a demonstration for the group to try, rather than have everyone make it. You will need small plastic pots if people are going to take it home, and give storage instructions.

Fruit: Other accompaniments often served separately with curries are chopped bananas, chutney, coconut and more sultanas. Providing a banana for each of the group to take home will improve the nutritional value of the meal.

Shopping list for session on curry

For a class of 8

Chicken curry

- 8 onions
- 8 carrots
- 1 bulb garlic (8 cloves)
- 8 eating apples
- mushrooms (enough for 2–3 each)
- 8 chicken breasts (preferably skinless)
- vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons curry powder x 8 (mixture of mild, medium etc.)
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger x 8

2 litres (8 x 150ml) vegetable stock
2 litres (8 x 150ml) unsweetened apple juice
8 tablespoons sultanas
8 tablespoons desiccated coconut
1½kg rice (variety of basmati, brown)
8 portions naan bread
8 small bananas (optional accompaniment)

Vegetable curry option

Quantities given for are sufficient for a demonstration or for one individual cooking, perhaps being used as a comparison with chicken curry or for a vegetarian option. Serves 3 or 4.

1 onion
1 clove of garlic
1 carrot
small portion of turnip
1 parsnip
2 medium sized potatoes
small head of broccoli
1 can chickpeas or canned lentils
½ tablespoon vegetable oil
2 tablespoons curry powder (mild/medium)
2 teaspoons ground ginger
150ml vegetable stock
150ml apple juice
handful of sultanas
1 tablespoon desiccated coconut

Raita

½ cucumber
1 small red onion
1 clove of garlic
250ml natural yoghurt
½ teaspoon ground pepper

Accessories

Provisions for the tea/coffee or lunch break.

What you do

Chicken curry

- Peel and chop onion, carrot and garlic, and add them to saucepan with the oil.
- Heat gently for a few minutes.
- Chop the chicken into chunks and add to the pan.
- Peel the apple, chop into quarters and remove the core, chop into chunks and add to pan.
- Add the curry powder and ginger to the pan and stir well.
- Mix in the stock and the apple juice.

- Finally add the sultanas and coconut and mix well.
- Cover pan with lid and continue cooking on a low heat for about 20 minutes. The curry should just bubble gently and may need stirring from time to time to stop it sticking to the pan.

Vegetable curry

- Peel and chop onion, carrot and garlic and add to saucepan with oil.
- Heat gently for a few minutes.
- Peel the potatoes, turnip and parsnip, chop into small chunks and add to the pan.
- Add the curry powder and ginger to the pan and stir well.
- Mix in the stock and apple juice.
- Finally add the sultanas and coconut and mix well.
- Cover the pan with lid and continue cooking on a low heat for about 20 minutes. The curry should just bubble gently and may need stirring from time to time to stop it sticking to the pan.
- Break the broccoli into small chunks and wash in cold water. Add to other ingredients in the final 5 minutes.
- The curry is ready when the vegetables are tender when tested with a knife.

Raita

- Peel the cucumber, cut it in half, scrape out the seeds with a teaspoon, and chop it into small pieces.
- Peel and finely chop the onion.
- Crush the garlic.
- Add the onion, cucumber, garlic and ground pepper to the yoghurt and mix thoroughly.

Vegetable, meat or fish stir fry

Munch Crunch 2 pages 50–55

Session plan

Set up equipment and tables as described

Lay out ingredients for the session using tabletop Eatwell mat (see photo *Munch Crunch 2*, page 50).

Welcome the group and chat about the previous session.

This session introduces the principles of stir frying. Once mastered, this is a really quick and healthy method of all-in-one cooking with room for lots of variation, with or without meat or fish. One of our aims is to increase the group's uptake of vegetables in their diet, and this recipe is perfect for just that.

Traditionally stir fries (e.g. chow mein) are cooked using a wok or deep-sided frying pan. The shape of the wok means that once heated there is a larger surface area to make contact with the ingredients, which need to be stirred constantly to ensure quick and even cooking.

Wok cooking is really quick and easy providing all the ingredients are first prepared – washed, dried using kitchen paper and, most important, chopped very thinly – and then added to the heated pan using little oil.

Unfortunately for this session it will probably be unlikely that 8 woks or deep frying pans are available. In any case there isn't space on the tabletop cookers to fit two side by side. But it's possible to use the large saucepans, demonstrating that lack of equipment is not necessarily a barrier to cooking!

However, if possible try to have at least one wok available to demonstrate, or for people to share if there's enough time.

Look at the ingredients taken along. Have a wide variety of vegetables and include fresh, canned and frozen.

The aim is to get group members to try lots of different vegetables, build confidence in identifying them and show how to prepare and use them. Don't forget tasting!

Points to make

All about vegetables: Use this opportunity to demonstrate how easy it is to prepare vegetables. Show different ways of chopping them e.g. slices, matchsticks. Take along a ready-prepared stir fry vegetable pack as comparison. Discuss freshness, cost, quantity. What is actually in the pack? Some are mostly bean sprouts. These packs are several days old before reaching the consumer. It's best to prepare vegetables as close to use as possible, as some essential vitamins can be lost as a result of heat, light, shredding, soaking in water etc.

A healthy balance: The recipe only contains a small quantity of meat or fish per person. Adding lots of vegetables not only makes more portions but also makes for a really healthy balanced meal. Turkey or chicken fillets are lower in fat, and you only need to use a little added oil.

Preparing the vegetables: Encourage the group to work through the preparation of each vegetable at the same time as each other: this makes it easier for you to supervise and give help where needed.

Give each member of the group a large plastic bowl for their prepared vegetables (see photo, *Munch Crunch 2*, page 52)

If onions, garlic and root ginger are being used, it's a good idea to leave chopping them until the end, as the raw onions can reduce your clients to tears! Since these will be used before the other vegetables, keep them separate.

Food safety: If using meat or fish, keep them cool in a chiller bag or fridge until required and then, after the vegetable preparation, cut them into thin pieces. Repeat messages about safe handling, storage and cooking of raw meat and fish.

Supervise the heating of oil in pans and the careful addition of onions and garlic to soften for a few minutes before adding meat or fish. The heat can be reduced once the meat or fish is browned.

Add the vegetables, stirring all the time (hence the name). There's no real sauce or liquid in this dish, so the ingredients have to be kept on the move otherwise they'll burn or stick!

Salt content: When tender, the dish is ready. It can then be seasoned to taste with soy sauce. There are different soy sauces, light or dark, the difference being more colouring – both are made with 19% soybean. Only a dash or two is needed: it's very strong and both sorts have a high salt content of 17.5% (they contain 7g sodium per 100g, equivalent to 17.5g salt per 100g).

Lemon juice is a great alternative and brings out the natural flavour of the vegetables.

A complete meal: When the dish is cooked, discuss the group's ideas for balancing this meal, for instance with noodles, rice, pasta, potatoes. Don't forget tasting!

You could prepare noodles as a group or perhaps if time is short give out one or two portions of noodles to cook at home, with instructions.

Ring the changes: During the break look at costing for this particular recipe. Discuss variations with the group. This is only one idea; what other ideas do they have? Different meats, vegetables?

Taking it home: Finish the session by ensuring that everyone knows exactly what to do with any food being taken home (refer to the Food hygiene and safety notes)

Shopping list for session on vegetable, meat or fish stir fry

For a class of 8

Vegetable stir fry*

- 8 onions
- 8 cloves garlic
- mushrooms (approx 250g)
- 4 large or 8 small courgettes
- 8 mixed peppers (group can swap ½ to get variety of colour)
- bunch spring onions
- 8 small carrots
- 1 pack beansprouts
- 1 pack baby corn
- 1 pack mangetout
- 2 leeks (chop in to 8 pieces, 1 per person)
- 1 piece root ginger
- can of bamboo shoots or water chestnuts (optional)

greens e.g. spinach leaves, pak choi, cabbage (shredded) (optional)
1 packet ready-prepared stir fry vegetables for comparison
vegetable oil
bottle soy sauce (light/dark)
lemon juice as an alternative
Chinese egg noodles x 8 portions

* Many other vegetables are suitable for this dish depending on availability: Chinese leaves, peas, spinach, broccoli etc.

In addition: for meat or fish stir fry

8 x 120g portions of lean meat/fish e.g. turkey breast fillet, salmon fillet

Accessories

Make sure the group have suitable containers if they are going to be taking food home.

A wok for demonstration.

A very large pan such as a large stock pot will be needed if you're cooking noodles for the group as a whole.

Provisions for the tea/coffee or lunch break.

What you do

- Peel and chop the onion.
- Peel and crush the garlic clove.
- Peel the ginger root and cut into thin strips.
- Peel and chop the carrot into similar lengths. Cut into thin pieces and then into matchsticks.
- Wash the courgette and chop as for carrot.
- Repeat for the leek, taking care to wash it well using a strainer (washing a leek after chopping is best, as dirt can easily be trapped in the payers).
- Wipe the mushrooms with damp kitchen towel or use a vegetable brush, then cut finely.
- Wash the pepper if using, cut it into strips, and remove the seeds and the core.
- Add the oil to a large frying pan or wok and heat over a medium heat for a few seconds.
- Add the onion, garlic, and ginger and stir for 2 minutes. If using meat add it at this stage and continue to stir well for 2 or 3 minutes.
- Add all the sliced vegetables and continue to stir to allow the meat and/or vegetables to cook for about 8–10 minutes. The time will depend on the size of the pan and the thickness of the vegetables.
- If using spinach, bean sprouts, shredded cabbage, wash them and add towards the end of the cooking time so they aren't over-cooked.
- Finally add some soy sauce or lemon juice to taste.
- The dish is ready when the meat/vegetables are just tender and not too soft.

Basic fish pie

Munch Crunch 2 pages 56–59

Session plan

Set up tabletop ovens and equipment.

Lay out ingredients using tabletop Eatwell mat (see photo, *Munch Crunch 2*, page 56).

Welcome the group and ask for feedback on the previous session. Did people enjoy the dishes? Did they try to make it again? How did that go?

Introduce this session on fish. Discuss the benefits of eating fish (see below). Ask the group why they perhaps avoid eating fish. They will probably be able to suggest a few reasons that you can discuss.

Get the group to look at the laid-out ingredients in relation to the plate model (have picture handy: see *Munch Crunch 2*, page 56).

Start the activity by getting everyone to peel potatoes. For ease, cook the potatoes in one large saucepan. Don't add salt.

Points to make

Why eat fish? We as a nation eat much less fish than our European neighbours even though we have access to some of the best and freshest produce around.

Discuss the benefits of eating fish regularly. It is recommended that we eat two portions of fish a week, one of which should be oily.

Fish is low in fat but does contain a beneficial polyunsaturated fatty acid (omega 3). Oily fish such as salmon, trout, herring, sardines, tuna (but not canned) and mackerel contain the highest levels, but white fish has some too. Omega 3 is thought to reduce the stickiness of the blood (rather than reducing blood cholesterol levels) and therefore the blood is less likely to form clots – this is beneficial in preventing heart attacks. Heart attacks and strokes often occur when the blood supply has been cut off by a clot to the heart or brain.

Fish is quick to cook, freezes well and can be cooked from frozen. Give each member of group a piece of fresh and frozen to cook.

Preparing and poaching fish: Everyone should poach their fish in semi-skimmed milk to which chopped onion has been simmering. You might need to demonstrate how to remove skin from fish and check for bones. If you're using a combination of frozen and fresh fish, start with the frozen fillet and add the fresh a few minutes later.

Food hygiene: Discuss the correct storage of fish in refrigerator. As with raw meat, uncooked fish should be stored below cooked food so that raw juices can't drop onto food that will be eaten without further cooking.

Explain the importance of scrubbing equipment and hands after handling raw fish. Use hot soapy water.

Encourage the group to use a variety of vegetables. Leeks need to be chopped then washed carefully in a colander. Highlight that there may be hidden bacteria in the dirt and so it's important to keep the chopping board clean.

Low fat, low salt sauce: When the fish is cooked everyone should use a slotted spoon to remove it to a dish, and will then make a white sauce with the cooking liquid. Explain this is

not the traditional method but a much healthier – and quicker – lower fat alternative. Season with chopped parsley, lemon juice, pepper. If the sauce is too thick, add more milk. If too thin, mix up a little more cornflour and add it to the sauce – stir quickly and well until thicker.

Extra vegetables: Layer choice of vegetables, e.g. leeks, on top of fish. There's no need to cook at this stage as the pie will be further cooked in the oven when required. Tinned peas or sweetcorn, or sliced or quartered mushrooms, could be added to the sauce as it is cooking.

Low fat, low salt mashed potatoes: When the potatoes are ready, drain and mash with a little milk rather than adding butter. Season with pepper, chives, garlic or herbs (not salt), then use the mashed potatoes to cover the fish and sauce. Make sure the potato is soft enough to spoon, otherwise it won't be possible to make a neat layer on top of the pie.

Top it off: Top pies with a few slices of tomato and a mixture of grated cheese and brown breadcrumbs or crushed cornflakes.

Finishing it at home: During the break, discuss how this dish should be stored correctly until it's required, and how to finish it off in the oven or microwave.

Compare: Emphasise that the group have made a great healthy low fat meal by using fish, semi-skimmed milk, cornflour and other natural flavourings. How this does compare with similar bought convenience products?

Shopping list for session on basic fish pie

For a class of 8

8 white fish fillets (approx 375g each)*
8 onions
4 leeks (½ each)
packet cornflour (2 teaspoonfuls each)
2.4 litres semi-skimmed milk (300ml each)
dried or fresh parsley
400g grated cheese for topping (50g each)
tomatoes for topping (2 each depending on size)
4kg potatoes for mashing
1 can sweetcorn (optional)
1 can frozen peas (optional)
crushed cornflakes or breadcrumbs for topping
bunch spring onions for chopping and putting through mash
pepper

* Budget frozen food stores sell bags of 4 x 120g fillets, usually haddock or cod: use 2–3 of these fillets per client. Look for buy 1 get 1 bag free offers. Some clients may prefer using some smoked fish, but remember this will contain added salt.

Accessories

8 basic medium sized ovenproof dishes (see photos, *Munch Crunch 2*, pages 44 and 73). If clients have already been given these, keep one or two in reserve as someone will at some stage forget to bring it back in!)

Provisions for the tea/coffee or lunch break.

What you do

- Peel potatoes and put in saucepan, cover with water and boil.
- Put fish into another saucepan (no need to defrost if frozen) and cover with the semi-skimmed milk and chopped onion. Bring to the boil and simmer for 2–3 minutes. The fish should no longer be translucent but opaque.
- Remove fish with a slotted spoon and place in a greased ovenproof dish. Sprinkle over the chopped washed leek.
- Make a white sauce by mixing the cornflour in a teacup with a little cold milk to paste, and then add some of the cooking milk from the pan to mix before adding it back to the saucepan, stirring until thickened over a medium heat. Cook for a few minutes until smooth. Add the chopped washed parsley. Pour this over the fish and set aside.
- Test the potatoes with a fork. When soft, drain off the water and mash the potatoes adding a little milk. When cool, stir in the chopped and washed spring onions and season with black pepper.
- Cover the fish and sauce with the mashed potatoes, and using the back of a fork fluff up the top of the mashed potato, then add a few slices of tomato and finally top with a mixture of grated cheese/crushed cornflakes or breadcrumbs.
- Bake in the oven heated to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4 for about 30 minutes until brown on top and well heated throughout.

Scones (sweet and savoury)

Munch Crunch 2 pages 67–72

Session plan

Set up equipment and cookers.

Welcome the group and discuss the previous session – how was it received?

This session demonstrates that some kinds of baking are healthier than others, and that this scone recipe could be part of a balanced diet – it has plenty of starch without too much fat or added sugar. Remember it's what else is added to a scone that can alter this balance e.g. jam and clotted cream or jam and butter/spread. This is a healthier choice for a snack or for adding to school/work lunch boxes or as play pieces. Scones belong in the bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods group on the Eatwell Plate.

Using convenient methods of measurement (teacup/dessertspoons) and minimum equipment, this recipe is quick and easy. No need for rolling pins or cutters; scones are shaped by hand.

Several batches could be made at once, and they're suitable for home freezing.

Sweet and savoury: Scones can be either sweet or savoury. Some people may not understand what is meant by savoury, so involve the group in discussing examples of sweet and savoury foods followed by some ideas for possible flavourings:

- savoury: e.g. cheese, herbs (chives, rosemary, thyme, etc.), chopped apple, peppers, spring onions, mustard,
- sweet: e.g. mixed dried fruit or chopped fresh fruit, apricots, grated orange, spices such as cinnamon.

Lay out the ingredients using the Eatwell mat then discuss the benefits of the different flours etc. (See session plan on pizzas).

Making the scones

Follow what you do step by step with your group as detailed in 'What you do' below.

In a two-hour session it will easily be possible for each person to make two batches. The savoury recipe was devised when we were working with school children (aged 10 years) and is very tasty but your group may like to try ideas of their own so it's worthwhile providing additional suitable ingredients.

Compare the scones made by the group with some purchased from local stores.

Consolidate healthy messages using a Hidden Sugar game, highlighting just how easy it is to control added sugar in home baking.

Shopping list for session on scones

For a class of 8

- 2 x 1kg bag wholemeal plain flour
- 2 x 1kg bag white plain flour
- 2 tubs baking powder
- 3 x 500g soft margarine (monounsaturated or polyunsaturated)
- 2 litres semi-skimmed milk

For savoury

4 green apples (½ each)
4 red peppers
bunch spring onions
450–500g mature cheese (approx 50g each)
jar grainy mustard

Other ideas:

canned sweetcorn
cucumber
different colour peppers
grated courgette
grated carrot

For sweet

8 small oranges
packet dried apricots
packet mixed dried fruit
packet sultanas
cinnamon
dried bananas

Other ideas:

chopped fruit, either canned or fresh

Accessories

Tea/coffee/extra milk/juice, and spread for scones.

Containers poly bags for carrying scones home.

Make sure you have enough baking trays.

Wire cooling racks are useful for cooling the first batch.

Hidden Sugar game – optional extra.

What you do

- Turn the oven on to 230°C/450°F/gas mark 8.
- Grease a baking tray with a little margarine, rubbing it on with kitchen paper, and then sprinkle the tray with a little flour. (This will stop the scones sticking to the tray.)

Making the scone mixture – stage 1

- Put 1 teacup of white plain flour and 1 teacup of plain wholemeal flour into a mixing bowl.
- Add 4 level teaspoons of baking powder.
- Stir the mixture with a fork.
- Add 3 level dessertspoons of soft margarine to the bowl.

- Then using only your fingertips, work the margarine into the flour until the mixture looks like breadcrumbs. This is called the 'rubbing in method'.
- At this stage decide whether you are making sweet or savoury scones.

Savoury scones – stage 2

- Grate a small cube of cheddar cheese, about 50g, (mature is better as you need less), and add to the mixture in your bowl.
- Chop half an apple as small as you can, leaving on the skin but removing the core – add to your bowl.
- Chop about one third of a red pepper and 1 spring onion as small as you can (remember to wash them first) – add to your bowl.
- Mix using the fork.
- You can also add 1 teaspoon of grain mustard if you wish.

Sweet scones – stage 2

- Add a handful of dried fruit or sultanas to the scone mixture you prepared in stage 1.
- You can grate the zest (the outer skin only) of a washed orange. Then cut the orange in half and use a fork to squeeze out the juice into the mixture.
- Try some chopped dried apricots and add to the mixture with the orange zest and juice.

Forming a soft dough for savoury or sweet scones – stage 3

- Use about half a teacup of semi-skimmed milk. Add a little milk at a time to the bowl, mixing with the fork until the mixture forms into a ball of soft dough.
- Sprinkle a little flour onto a clean worktop or board and pat the dough out into a round shape.
- Cut into triangles or shape into rounds using your hands.
- Space your scones out on the baking sheet and tap the top of each one with your fingers dipped in milk.
- Bake in the heated oven about 10 minutes until the top is golden.

Fruit crumbles and custard

Munch Crunch 2 pages 73–78

Session plan

Set up equipment and cookers.

Lay out the ingredients on the Eatwell tabletop mat.

If possible, and depending on the types of ovenproof dishes available, it's a good idea to have the group make up several crumbles using different fruit. Many catering suppliers stock different sizes of disposable ovenproof and microwaveable dishes. This means that those in the group who live alone can make several individual portions, while others may prefer larger dishes to make family sizes. In the North Ayrshire project we give our clients a basic ovenproof dish such as the one in this recipe (and as described in the shopping for cooking classes notes), which they bring back each week. It saves a lot of hassle. Obviously a few extra disposable dishes are good for some sessions, especially this one if people are going to make more than one dish.

Welcome the group and chat about the previous session and whether people enjoyed the food they'd made.

Introduce this session looking at puddings.

Points to make

Healthier puddings: Ask the group for their favourite pudding. Most of our favourites will be high in fat – especially if made with cream – and certainly most will be high in sugar. These are always nice for an occasional treat, but use this session to talk about healthier options – milk puddings, fruit-based puddings (crumbles, sponges), yoghurts, crepes filled with fruit.

How can you make them healthier? By using:

- lower fat milk,
- low fat crème fraîche,
- less sugar,
- fruit or dried fruit to sweeten,
- lower fat choices, e.g. scone base, breadcrumbs.

Fruit: Involve the group in a discussion around the different types of fruit. Have a mixture of suitable fresh, canned, frozen and dried fruits. Canned fruits should be in juice rather than syrup or they will be very high in sugar. Remind the group that we need to eat at least 5 portions of fruit or vegetables a day. Cost shouldn't be a barrier to eating 5 a day if you shop wisely. It doesn't always need to be fresh fruit, but it's sensible to buy fruit that's in season and to look out for offers. Go over the different ways of eating 5 a day – raw, canned, stewed or dried fruit, juices and smoothies.

Reinforce the message, ensuring that everyone understands the benefits of eating more fruit:

- Fruit is a good source of nutrients (vitamins, minerals and fibre) that the body needs to work well and stay healthy.
- It's important to eat a variety to make sure you get useful amounts of a wide range of nutrients. The body can't store some of these and they are therefore required daily. Talk

about the idea of eating a rainbow – different colours of fruits and veg in the day – red, yellow, orange, green, blue!

- Evidence suggests that some vitamins may protect against coronary heart disease and stroke and are a useful source of antioxidants which will help reduce the risk of some types of cancer.

Flour: Take along a choice of flours and encourage using wholemeal or at least a mixture of wholemeal and white. Mention the milling of flour – the most commonly used ones used are wheat based. Wholemeal is made from 100% whole grain, brown flour contains about 85% of the original grain and white flour is made from the central section of the grain only. Some brown flours are in fact white with colouring!

Why wholegrain?

- Most of the popular cereal foods we eat are refined, but it's recommended that we all eat more wholegrain foods as part of a healthy diet.
- Wholegrains are an excellent source of a whole range of beneficial nutrients as well as providing both soluble and insoluble fibres.
- They provide a slow release of sugar into the blood which together with the fibre content may help with feeling fuller longer and reduce the need to snack.
- Soluble fibre can help prevent heart disease as it is known to help lower blood cholesterol levels (LDL), and can help in the control of type 2 diabetes.
- Insoluble fibres are important in keeping the bowel healthy.

The recipe used for the crumble includes adding some rolled oats; this increases the fibre content of the dish. Oats are also an excellent source of soluble fibre.

Low fat: Only a small amount of fat is used in the recipe, use a soft mono or polyunsaturated margarine suitable for baking rather than butter or solid margarine these are higher in saturated fat. It is important to emphasise that the measurement of added fat given is a level measure. Experience has shown that unsupervised clients will often use far too much.

Measurements: This recipe is designed to be quick and easy, using minimal equipment. There's no need for scales because quantities are given using spoons and teacups.

Ring the changes: It will probably be necessary to demonstrate the rubbing in method with the group. Talk through the options so that they feel relaxed and comfortable about what they're going to be doing. Get them making an apple-based crumble first (there's no need to cook apples first, or to add sugar if using dessert apples). For a second/third crumble encourage creativity. What fruits could combine well? You may need to suggest ideas – pineapple and banana with perhaps some coconut through the crumble, rhubarb and ginger, peaches and pear, apple and bramble etc.

Additions: If it's going to take a while preparing apples, show that adding lemon juice will stop the apple turning brown on contact with the air (antioxidant). Suggest adding spices, raisins or frozen mixed berries (defrost first).

Taking them home: If time allows you could bake them during the session. But sometimes it's a rush to get them cool enough to transport home, in which case provide clear poly bags or cling film to cover, and perhaps printed instructions on sticky labels with cooking instructions. For example: 'Place dish on an oven tray and bake 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6 for 15–20 minutes until top is browned.'

Other healthy puddings: Ask the group for other ideas of quick healthy puddings to try, or you may have to suggest a few: baked banana in cinnamon and orange juice, baked or stewed apples, poached pears in cranberry juice etc.

Custard: Take along bought varieties (a packet of instant custard mix, a can or carton of ready-made, and a tin of custard powder).

Involve the group in making up samples of the custard powder and instant mix.

We make the custard powder version healthier by using semi-skimmed milk and we use half the recommended amount of sugar suggested on the tin.

Tasting: Place the custards in separate bowls in a row, taking care to conceal which kind it is (you could hide the label under the bowl). Give each client several plastic teaspoons depending on how many types of custard you have and ask them to taste them all. Which do they prefer? Why do they like it (sweetness, colour, creamier etc.)?

See the table below, comparing some examples you could use.

The benefits of using custard powder made up with semi-skimmed milk (full milk for under-fives only):

- cheaper,
- a tin of powder will last for a long time,
- more control over added fat and sugar,
- made with milk while instant is made with water,
- makes a nutritious pudding, especially if served with fresh or canned fruit, and is ideal for everyone.

Finally use a Hidden Sugar game.

Shopping list for session on fruit crumbles and custard

For a class of 8

For the crumble topping

1½kg bag wholemeal flour (plain)
1½kg bag white flour (plain)
1kg bag porridge oats
500g soft polyunsaturated or monounsaturated margarine (using 2 x 250g tubs saves time)
(Take extra flour, oats and margarine if making more than one crumble)
1 bag granulated sugar
desiccated coconut (optional)

For apple crumble (for each person to make a crumble for 3-4)

8 x 6 dessert apples (for example Golden Delicious or those on special offer)
1 bag frozen mixed berries or canned berries (optional)
1 bag raisins or sultanas (optional)
spices: cinnamon, ground ginger, mixed spice
bottle lemon juice (optional)

For mixed fruit crumbles

Take enough for everyone in the group to combine different fruits. It's better to have more than less; any extra canned fruits could be kept used later for smoothies)

selection of seasonal fresh fruits, e.g. rhubarb, bananas, pears

selection of canned fruits in juice, e.g. pineapple, peaches, apricots

1 bag frozen fruits, e.g. summer fruits

Custard: for tasting comparison exercise

tub custard powder

packet instant custard mix

carton/can of ready-made custard

1 litre semi-skimmed milk

a little sugar

packet of disposable teaspoons for tasting

Accessories

Disposable dishes and labels to mark crumbles. Clients should have brought back their ovenproof dish to use for the first crumble.

Provisions for tea/coffee break – milk/juice, scones/pancakes etc

What you do

Apple crumble

- Put on the oven to heat to 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6.
- Tip a cupful of flour into a mixing bowl.
- Add the margarine and then, using your fingertips, work the margarine into the flour until the mixture looks like breadcrumbs.
- Add the oats and sugar to this and stir to mix.
- Peel, core and chop the apples and add to an ovenproof dish.
- Cover apples with the crumbed mixture and press down using your hands.
- Place dish on an oven tray and bake for 15–20 minutes until top has browned.

Custard

- Using a mixing bowl or jug mix a little of the cold milk with the custard powder and sugar to a smooth paste.
- Heat the remainder of the milk in a saucepan, taking care not to boil it over.
- When almost boiling, remove pan from heat and add a little of the heated milk to the paste in the jug. Mix well and then add back to the remaining milk in the saucepan.
- Stir well and continue to heat gently until the custard starts to thicken.
- Remove from the heat and serve at once or allow to cool for serving later.

Comparison of available custard products

	Devon Custard	Custard Powder (made with semi-skimmed milk)	Custard Powder (made with whole milk)	Instant Custard Mix (made with water)	Low Fat Instant Custard Mix (made with water)
Nutrition information					
Typical values per 100g of ready-made or made-up product					
Energy	429kj 102kcal	288kj 84kcal	412kj 98kcal	268kj 63kcal	257kj 61kcal
Protein	2.9g	3.1g	3.0g	0.7g	0.7g
Carbohydrate	16.0g	14.0g	14.1g	11.4g	11.8g
Incl. sugars	12.0g	9.5g	9.6g	7.6g	7.8g
Fat	2.9g	1.8g	3.5g	1.7g	1.4g
Incl. saturates	1.6g	1.1g	2.2g	1.6g	1.2g
Fibre	0g	trace	trace	trace	trace
Sodium	trace	0.1g	0.1g	trace	trace
Salt	0.1g	0.2g	0.2g	0.1g	0.1g

Fruit salad

Munch Crunch 2 pages 79–83

Session plan

Set up your equipment and tables. For each person you'll need a chopping board, large plastic bowl, small knife and apron. A large plastic lidded tub will be required to carry fruit salad home.

This is a useful session to encourage to your group to include more fruit in their diet.

Follow what to do in stages with your group as given under 'What to do' below. It may be straightforward to some people in the class, but others for instance will never have cut up a pineapple.

This session can be easily completed in an hour and therefore be combined with some of the other ideas in this manual e.g.

- making smoothies,
- making custard and perhaps tasting yoghurts. The group could try blending fruit and natural yoghurt – remember a bag of plastic teaspoons is great to have for this,
- making pancakes and crepes. These can then be used along with fruit salad. This is a favourite with clients and very easy,
- a Hidden Sugar game.

Points to make

(Many of these messages are the same as in the fruit crumble session.)

Highlight the benefits of eating a variety of fruit.

This session focus's on using all fresh fruit rather than canned or frozen, but at home both these could be used as the basis of a fruit salad and then bulked out with other fruits in the fruit bowl, fridge or store cupboard. Make sure you discuss these alternatives, as in the winter fresh fruit can be particularly expensive. We tend not to use exotic fruits because the cost is prohibitive, but depending on your activity it may be an idea to include some for tasting.

Involve the group in a discussion around the different types of fruit. Have a mixture of suitable fresh, canned, frozen and dried fruits. Canned fruits should be in juice rather than syrup or they will be very high in sugar.

Remind the group that we need to eat at least 5 portions of fruit or vegetables a day, and talk about what constitutes a portion. Go over the different ways of eating 5 a day – raw, canned, stewed or dried fruit, juices and smoothies.

Cost shouldn't be a barrier to eating 5 a day if you shop wisely. It doesn't always need to be fresh fruit, but it's sensible to buy fruit that's in season and to look out for offers.

Reinforce the message, ensuring that everyone understands the benefits of eating more fruit:

- Fruit is a good source of nutrients (vitamins, minerals and fibre) that the body needs to work well and stay healthy.
- It's important to eat a variety to make sure you get useful amounts of a wide range of nutrients. The body can't store some of these and they are therefore required daily.

- Evidence suggests that some vitamins may protect against coronary heart disease and stroke and are a useful source of antioxidants which will help reduce the risk of some types of cancer.

Hygiene: As this is a no-cook session remember to stress the importance of good hand hygiene (see Food safety and hygiene notes).

Shopping list for session on fresh fruit salad

For a class of 8

- 1 medium pineapple
- 1 large melon e.g. honeydew or piel de sapo, galia etc., or 2 smaller
- 8 green apples (make sure not bruised and have a good skin)
- 8 red apples (make sure not bruised and have a good skin)
- 9 large oranges (1 for demo)
- 8 kiwi fruit
- 1 punnet strawberries/raspberries (if available and reasonably priced)
- 1 punnet blueberries (if available and reasonably priced)
- 8 small bananas
- large bunch black seedless grapes
- 2 cartons pure unsweetened fruit juice e.g. apple, orange
- 1 bottle lemon juice

Accessories

8 plastic tubs with lids.

Provisions for tea break: milk, scones/pancakes etc.

What you do

1. Apples

- Wash and dry two apples.
- Cut them into two halves each, then into four quarters. Remove the core. Then slice and dice both apples, remembering to leave the skins on. Make sure you do your chopping on a clean chopping board.
- Put the chopped apples into a suitable clean bowl and add a little lemon juice (this will stop the apples and sliced banana turning brown).

2. Melon

- Lay a wedge of melon on its side on the chopping board and remove the outer skin carefully with a small knife. Then chop the melon wedge into small bite-size pieces and add to the bowl.

3. Banana

- Peel and chop the banana and add to the bowl, tossing the banana with the apple and a little lemon juice.

4. Pineapple

- If you're using a tin of pineapple, open it carefully with a can opener, and add the pineapple and juice to your bowl. (Depending on the size of pineapple pieces you may want to chop them into smaller bits before you add them to the bowl.)
- If you're using a small whole pineapple, first slice off the top and then the bottom core. Cut the pineapple into two halves and then four quarters.
- It should be easy to cut the centre core out by laying each quarter on its side on the chopping board, as you did for the melon. Then cut round inside the skin as you did for the melon. You can then cut the pineapple into small chunks.

5. Oranges or satsumas

- Peel the satsumas or orange, separate into segments and add to the rest of the salad.

6. Kiwi fruit

- Peel and slice the kiwi fruit and add.

7. Grapes and berries

- Next wash and pat dry the grapes. Cut them in half and remove the seeds if you are not using seedless grapes. Add the grapes to the bowl.
- Do the same with any berries, washing them well first.
- Finally give the salad a stir with a spoon to mix the different fruits and pour over enough fruit juice to cover most of the fruit.

Additional recipes and activities

These recipes and sessions are not in the Munch Crunch 2 recipe book but may provide some additional resources for longer sessions. They will consolidate skills learnt in the sessions linked to Munch Crunch 2, rather than replacing them.

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Pancakes/crepes

Session plan

This session combines well with making fresh fruit salad. Your group could try some of their freshly prepared fruit rolled up in a freshly cooked crepe or pancake.

Top this off by providing some natural yoghurt or lower fat crème fraîche.

A possible activity could be to have your group try combining different fruits with natural yoghurt (include canned fruits in juice). You will need to take along some hand blenders and small yoghurt-sized containers with lids. Small colourful lidded pots are readily available and cheap in most supermarkets; ones with cartoons etc. can be more acceptable to children and ideal for packed lunch boxes.

For making the crepes and pancakes, have the group working in pairs, taking turns to cook.

Points to make

Involve the group in a discussion around the benefits of lower fat alternatives to full fat cream and ice creams.

Using natural yoghurt and chopped fruit (mixed or pureed together) is not only healthier (lower fat and no added sugars or sweeteners) but can be cheaper than many other types of yoghurt. The nutritional difference between low fat and ordinary natural yoghurt is quite small and for under 5's is not really significant.

Suggest trying crepes with savoury fillings; discuss ideas with the group – e.g. chicken fajitas, chilli, chopped salad and cooked meats etc.

Shopping list for crepes/pancakes session

Assuming the group works in pairs, the quantities given would yield sufficient for them to consume during the session as a taster.

For a class of 8, working in pairs

- 1kg bag self raising flour – 125g (1 teacup) per pair
- 1 small bag sugar – 1 dessertspoon per pair (if using: try replacing sugar with a handful of dried fruit, or leave out for savoury pancakes)
- 1 litre semi-skimmed milk for pancakes (180ml, or $\frac{3}{4}$ teacup, per pair), or 2 litres for crepes (300ml per pair)
- 4 eggs (1 per pair)
- a little vegetable oil for cooking
- selection of fruit (fresh and canned) if not using fruit salad prepared in the same session
- raisins/sultanas (optional)
- 500g pot lower fat crème fraîche
- 500g pot natural yoghurt

Accessories

4 non-stick frying pans and wooden spatulas

Hand blenders if trying the yoghurt activity

What you do

Pancakes

(Group working in pairs and taking turns to cook.)

- Chop up fruit (if not using fresh fruit salad made in the same session).
- Put flour and sugar into a bowl.
- Crack open the egg and add to centre of flour.
- Beat with wooden spoon adding the milk a little at a time, until all the milk is added and the batter has no lumps.
- Heat a little oil, no more than a teaspoon, gently in a non-stick frying pan (tipping out excess into a clean teacup). Or use a little oil on a piece of kitchen paper to lightly grease surface of pan.
- Drop in 2 spoonfuls for each pancake (leave a space between them).
- Cook for 2 minutes and turn over with a spatula (usually when bubbles have appeared evenly over surface of pancake).
- Cook for another minute or so, until lightly browned.
- Remove from pan with spatula. Now it's ready to enjoy with some fruit.
- Using the excess oil in the teacup re-grease frying pan and repeat above until all the batter is used up.
- **Options:** Try adding some fresh blueberries or sliced banana to the mix and then cooking. Have fun experimenting with different fruits.

Crepes

(Group working in pairs and taking turns to cook.)

- Follow recipe as above but use 300ml of semi-skimmed milk to make a smooth batter – it will be very much thinner.
- Heat a little oil, no more than a teaspoon, gently in a non-stick frying pan (tipping out excess into a clean teacup) or use a little oil on a piece of kitchen paper to lightly grease surface of pan.
- Using a ladle add a little of the batter and, holding the frying pan by the handle, gently swirl batter until it covers base of frying pan very thinly.
- Cook for 2–3 minutes over a gentle heat until the edges begin to shrink from the edge of the pan. Use the spatula to lift one side up to check it is lightly browned.
- Use the spatula to flip over and continue cooking for a further 1–2 minutes until lightly coloured.
- Tip out onto a plate, add some fruit and enjoy with some low fat crème fraiche or natural yoghurt.

Cottage pie

Session plan

Set up equipment and cookers as required. For this session you will need a saucepan for each client and also a large stock-type pot (approx 10 litre capacity) to cook potato topping for the whole group.

Welcome the group and chat about the previous session – have they have tried to make the dish again?

Introduce this session. They will be making their own cottage pie, which can be a very well-balanced meal.

Use the Eatwell tabletop mat to display the ingredients.

Points to make

Lean mince: Talk about the importance of choosing leaner mince. There's no need to add oil or fat for browning mince because there will be enough in the mince. Some supermarkets and butchers offer mince which is less than 20%, less than 10% and sometimes less than 5% fat. If after browning the mince there is fat visible this can be drained off. If on the other hand the mince is so lean that it starts to stick to the pan just add a spoonful of cold water and continue to brown gently.

Potatoes: It's a good idea to get the group peeling the potatoes first and to get them cooking. In the North Ayrshire project we often use the centre's main cooker for this (if available) for safety reasons. It's not a good idea to have such a large pot boiling away with participants who lack confidence. If you're using all the rings on your portable ovens with the group, space can be an issue.

Talk about potato varieties and the correct storage of potatoes, or remind the group of the main points if you've already discussed it in previous sessions on jacket potatoes or potato wedges.

Potatoes should be stored in a cool dark place and not the fridge. Storing potatoes in the fridge can increase the sugar level they contain. This can lead to higher levels of a potentially harmful chemical called acrylamide when potatoes are baked, roasted or fried at very high temperatures.

It's advisable not to eat green, damaged or sprouted parts of potatoes. These can contain high levels of a natural toxin called glycoalkaloids. If potatoes still taste bitter after removing these bits it's better not to eat them. Really high levels of glycoalkaloids can upset the digestive system.

Add other vegetables to mash: Suggest ways of incorporating more vegetables into this dish e.g. for fussy children some vegetables can be 'hidden' in their mash. Things like swede, carrot and turnip can be chopped up small and cooked along with the potatoes. Shredded cabbage doesn't need so much cooking so can be added to the pan for the final 10 minutes. Drain and mash together. Alternately try adding a little garlic with a tablespoon of olive oil, or finely chopped washed spring onions. If space allows and two large pots are available try making two different types of mash with the group.

Reduced fat and salt: When creaming mashed potatoes, add a little semi-skimmed milk rather than butter or cream, and pepper.

Encourage the group not to add salt to their potatoes. They will gradually get used to it – it's a bit like giving up sugar in your tea. Do it gradually.

Both the Hidden Fat and Traffic Light Salt games link in well, and either could be used to reinforce the healthy eating messages.

Use variety of vegetables with mince: Depending on how many sessions you've had with the group, you may need to demonstrate the preparation of each vegetable as you go along.

Encourage the group to bulk out their mince by incorporating as many as possible of the vegetables you have supplied. For those with fussy eaters or very young children, have graters available; suggest adding grated vegetables or frozen peas.

Taste and compare: Encourage tasting of the cooked mince – using clean teaspoons – before adding the potato topping. Group could compare as individuals will have added different vegetables. Who has made the best use of available vegetables? Discuss the difference in taste.

If time allows, make comparisons – cost and ingredients – with ready-made versions (chilled and frozen): look at additives, salt, fat levels and added vegetables.

Safe storage: Finally cover for taking home. Give the group instructions for storage and reheating this dish. Once cooled, the dish should be put in the fridge for up to 24 hours. To serve, bake in a moderate oven (190°C or 375°F or Gas 5) until piping hot all the way through. It could also be microwaved – participants should follow instructions for their own microwave but remember to heat it thoroughly until piping hot all the way through.

Shopping list for session on cottage pie

For a class of 8

8 large onions

8 large carrots

4kg lean beef mince (500g each)

1 punnet mushrooms

selection of other vegetables e.g. frozen baby peas or mixed vegetables, turnip

gravy browning or cornflour

black pepper

For potato topping

4 x 2½kg bags potatoes suitable for mashing

other vegetables to add to mash e.g. ½ swede, carrots or ½ cabbage, bunch of spring onions

a little semi-skimmed milk, or small quantity of olive oil, for mashing

Accessories

1 or 2 really large lidded pots for cooking potatoes.

Ovenproof dishes.

Cling film or roll of large polythene bags to cover dishes for transporting home.

Provisions for tea break: milk, tea, juice, scones or rolls with suitable filling.

What you do

- Brown the mince and then add chopped onion and other vegetables.
- Add either cold water, just enough to cover vegetables. Then simmer for 30 minutes until vegetables are tender.
- When the mince and vegetables are cooked, add gravy browning, or use a little cornflour to thicken slightly, or reduce liquid by removing lids from saucepans and simmering for a little longer.
- Season with black pepper rather than adding salt.
- Transfer contents to an ovenproof dish and allow to cool.
- Add mashed potato topping carefully. (It can be useful to demonstrate this to the group using a large spoon and a table knife to spread evenly.) Fluff up the surface with a fork.

Spaghetti bolognese or lasagne

Session notes

Set up equipment and cookers as required. As well as a saucepan for each client, for this session you'll need a large stock-type pot (approx 10 litres capacity) if you're cooking pasta or making béchamel sauce for the lasagne as a group.

Introduce the session to the group. They'll be making a basic tomato meat sauce which can be used for a family favourite – spaghetti bolognese or lasagne.

If practical, perhaps some of the group could choose to make spaghetti bolognese and some to make the lasagne so that the group can gain experience of both and see how easy it is to adapt recipes.

Points to make

Compare: It's a good idea to have one or two examples of ready-prepared versions of the above from your local supermarket; either the frozen section or chilled section. These can be used as a comparison (look at salt and fat levels) and to reinforce the healthier eating messages. Don't forget a cost comparison.

More vegetables: Discuss the ingredients using the Eatwell tabletop mat. Encourage the group to incorporate more vegetables into the meat sauce they'll be preparing.

Mince: When choosing mince try to encourage people to buy the leanest they can afford. Beef mince is often available with fat content less than 20%, less than 10% and sometimes less than 5%.]When browning mince add it straight to the pan; there's no need for further oil. If there's a lot of fat once browned, it can be drained off. On the other hand, very lean mince may start to stick to the pan, in which case add a tablespoon or two of cold water.

Less fat and salt: If there's time this session could be supported using a Hidden Fat game. A Traffic Light Salt game would also be useful.

Child friendly: As well as lasagne sheets, have available a variety of pasta shapes and spaghetti for people to choose from – young children will enjoy some of the fun shapes that you can buy.

Healthy sauce: The sauce for the lasagne is healthier than sauces made using the traditional roux method which uses a mixture of fat and flour. This is made using cornflour and semi-skimmed milk. Cornflour is a useful store cupboard item for thickening gravies and sauces. If sauce is too thin mix a little more cornflour with a little water and add it. If sauce is too thick add a little more milk or water.

A balanced meal: When the recipes have been prepared, discuss what else could be eaten to make it more of a balanced meal – perhaps more vegetables, bread or a side salad.

Taste and compare: Encourage tasting of each other's sauce – remember to provide enough suitable spoons.

Taking it home: Provide suitable covering for dishes for taking them home.

Make sure everyone knows how to safely store the meal they have prepared until required, and give out clear instructions for reheating or oven baking.

Shopping list for session on spaghetti bolognese and/or lasagne

For a class of 8, and offering a choice of spaghetti bolognese or lasagne. Quantities given are for family-sized portions (4–6) for each member of the group.

Basic tomato meat sauce

4kg lean mince (500g per group member)
8 onions
8 large carrots
1 punnet mushrooms
1 or 2 bulbs garlic
8 cans chopped tomatoes
4 tubes tomato puree
dried mixed herbs
black pepper
4 mixed peppers (optional)

Spaghetti bolognese

Adjust quantities for numbers wishing to make this.

a variety of different dried pasta shapes and spaghetti
parmesan cheese for grating

Garlic bread (if time)

baguettes
polyunsaturated or monounsaturated spread
1 bulb garlic
tin foil

Lasagne

Adjust quantities for numbers wishing to make this.

packets of lasagne sheets
semi-skimmed milk (at least 300 ml/per person)
packet of cornflour
mature cheddar for grating on top
2 slicing tomatoes per person
a few bay leaves
black pepper

Accessories

Large stock-type pot for boiling pasta, unless you're giving the group dried pasta to cook at home with instructions.

Large stock-type pot for making enough béchamel sauce for all those wishing to make lasagne.

An ovenproof dish (as specified in the Shopping for sessions notes) for each person making lasagne.*

Lidded containers for those taking bolognese home*

Provisions for tea/coffee break.

* participants will probably will have been given these at the start of the course and asked to bring them back for each additional session, but it's worth having some extra in case people forget them.

What you do

Basic tomato meat sauce

- Add mince to saucepan and brown gently over a low heat, stirring all the time with a wooden spoon to break up the mince and prevent sticking. If mince is very lean you may need to add a spoonful or two of cold water.
- Then add finely chopped onion and a clove of garlic.
- Peel and finely chop or grate one or two carrots and add to the saucepan.
- By adding extra vegetables such as sliced mushrooms or chopped peppers the dish will not only be healthier but will also go a lot further.
- Add a can of chopped tomatoes, rinsing it out with a little cold water and adding to the saucepan.
- Stir in 3 tablespoons of tomato puree and ½ teaspoonful of mixed dried herbs
- Season with a little black pepper.
- Cover saucepan with a lid and simmer over a gentle heat for approx 25–30 minutes until cooked through and mince is tender.
- Check and stir from time to time and make sure saucepan doesn't boil dry. Add a little more cold water if required.
- When ready this sauce can be:
 - served with pasta, topping it with some grated parmesan cheese, or
 - used to make lasagne.

Pasta

- While meat sauce is cooking boil enough water to fill a large saucepan three-quarters full.
- Bring to the boil and add enough pasta depending on servings required (following guide on packet).
- Stir from time to time to prevent sticking, with water bubbling gently.
- Cook for approx 10 minutes until pasta is tender but with a little bite.
- Drain carefully using a colander in the sink.
- Serve with the meat sauce when ready; topping it with some grated cheese and enjoy with some freshly prepared garlic bread.

Lasagne

Make sure everyone has an ovenproof dish as described in the Shopping for cooking classes notes.

Make meat sauce as above.

Depending on numbers in group and available saucepans it's often easier to make one large batch of béchamel sauce for the whole group.

- Heat enough semi-skimmed milk in a large saucepan (allow approx 300ml per person), adding a bay leaf for flavour.
- Mix cornflour in a cup with a little cold water – use guide on packet as to how much to use (3 teaspoons of cornflour (15g) will thicken 250ml milk).
- Bring milk to the boil then whisk in cornflour/water mix and mix until thickened.
- Add some black pepper for seasoning.
- Using ladles add a layer of the meat sauce to a clean oven dish.
- Add a layer of lasagne sheets (make sure not to overlap), breaking into smaller bits to cover the whole area of meat sauce.
- Add a thin layer of the béchamel sauce to just cover lasagne sheets.
- Repeat with another layer of meat sauce, lasagne sheets and finish with remainder of béchamel sauce.
- Slice 1 or 2 tomatoes and layer on top and finish with a little grated cheddar cheese.
- The group will probably wish to take this home to have for dinner, in which case allow the dish to cool and then cover for taking home.
- This dish should be stored in the fridge at home when cool, and used within 24 hours.
- When required place oven dish in the oven, preferably on a baking tray, and bake in a preheated oven at 190C/375F/gas mark 5 until piping hot all the way through.
- Test that it's cooked through by sampling carefully from the middle using a clean fork.

Chilli con carne

What you need to cook this at home

500g lean beef mince
1 tin chopped tomatoes
1 large onion
½ green pepper
½ red pepper
3 tablespoons tomato puree
¾ teaspoon ground cumin
1½ teaspoons chilli powder
1 clove garlic
1 beef stock cube
black pepper
small tin red kidney beans

What you do

- Place mince in a saucepan and cook over a medium heat, stirring until meat has broken up and browned. Even lean mince will have enough fat to prevent the mince from sticking to the pot. Pour off any remaining fat.
- Peel the onion and chop it finely.
- Chop the red and green pepper into small pieces and discard the seeds.
- Peel the garlic and chop or press, and then add to the meat with chopped tomatoes and tomato puree, onion and peppers.
- Add black pepper to taste.
- Add ground cumin and chilli powder, and crumble the stock cube into the pan.
- Stir well and return the pot to the heat. When the sauce is bubbling, turn heat down to low and simmer for about 25–30 minutes, stirring occasionally to ensure the meat doesn't stick to the pot. If the mixture becomes too dry, add a little water and stir.
- Drain red kidney beans and rinse under cold running water, add to the pan. Continue to simmer for another 10 minutes.
- Serve with rice, baked potato or potato wedges.

Shopping list for session on chilli con carne

For a class of 8

4kg lean mince (500g per group member)
8 tins chopped tomatoes
8 large onions
4 green peppers
4 red peppers
4 tubes tomato puree
1 tub mild chilli powder
1 jar ground cumin
2 garlic bulbs

8 beef stock cubes
black pepper
4 tins red kidney beans
1½kg rice (variety of basmati and brown)

Points to make

For teaching points refer to the notes on healthy eating messages.

Additional teaching points from the sessions on cottage pie and spaghetti bolognese will be relevant to this recipe.

For additional teaching points for rice, see session on chicken curry.

Homemade burgers

Session plan

Set up ovens and tables as previously described. It's a good idea to preheat ovens prior to the group arriving.

Welcome the group and have a chat about the previous session.

Spend a few minutes chatting with the group about their views of burgers. How often do they eat them? What do they buy? How often do they visit fast food outlets? Are burgers a healthy option?

Introduce the session, when they'll discover how easy it is to make their own burgers, the benefits and how they can be much healthier.

Points to make

Cooking methods: Grilling and baking in the oven are the healthier methods of cooking.

Include vegetables: Start by laying out the ingredients taken along, using the Eatwell tabletop mat. Highlight the vegetables that they'll be able to choose from and encourage people to try a variety. Plan to have the group prepare a bowl of mixed salad as an accompaniment.

It's very easy to include/hide vegetables in these burgers, e.g. grated carrot, baby peas or sweetcorn. This is especially important if children are fussy eaters and you're having difficulty in encouraging them to try vegetables.

Reduce fat and salt: Many processed burgers can be particularly high in fat and added salt, but by making your own you can greatly reduce these levels.

If the group haven't previously covered saturated fats this is a good opportunity to emphasise the health benefits of reducing fat and in particular saturated fats in our diet.

Use a Hidden Fat game as a supporting resource for this activity.

Discuss the different flavourings they'll be able to add – chilli powder, garlic, barbecue seasoning, dried herbs, Worcester sauce – rather than adding salt.

Lean mince: Encourage everyone to look for the leanest mince they can afford; these days most supermarket chains offer a choice of steak mince with a fat content less than 20% and better still 10% and occasionally even as low as 5%.

Although beef mince is more commonly used in burgers, you could provide samples of other lean meats that would be suitable e.g. turkey mince or lamb mince.

Hygiene: Before your group begin their preparation stress the importance of hand washing, and again after handling raw meat. Talk about the risk of cross-contamination.

Making the burgers: Work through 'What you do' with the group, explaining that thicker burgers will take longer to cook, and that it's probably better to make them all the same size for easier cooking.

What you do

- Turn on ovens to heat prior to start (200°C/400°F/gas mark 6)
- Put mince in a large bowl and break up with wooden spoon.
- Then add finely chopped onion, and garlic if using.
- Peel and grate a carrot and add to mixture in bowl.
- Add a small quantity of extra vegetables e.g. baby peas, canned sweetcorn, finely chopped mushrooms, mixed peppers
- Offer people a choice of seasoning instead of salt: Worcester sauce, chilli powder, soy sauce, herbs etc.
- Add a beaten egg to bind, followed by a handful of breadcrumbs – just enough to ensure mixture isn't too sticky.
- Using hands, portion and shape into 6–8 burgers on a chopping board.
- Place on a baking tray (lining with foil reduces cleaning afterwards).
- Make sure everyone washes their hands thoroughly before placing baking trays in preheated oven.
- Bake until cooked through. Make sure meat is properly cooked; it should not be pink in the middle. Timings will depend on thickness of burgers but generally will take 20–30 minutes.
- After group has washed up equipment they could then prepare a bowl of salad.
- Provide a variety of rolls (include some wholegrain and some sesame) and relish so that when the burgers are cooked the group can sit down to enjoy one of their own efforts.
- Over tea and coffee encourage comparisons between the group's homemade burgers and frozen/economy burgers – ideally you will have cooked some for taste comparison as well as looking at the ingredients.
- Allow remainder to cool and provide containers for everyone to transport them home. If they are not being eaten straight away, give clear instructions as to storage and reheating. They need to be cooled thoroughly, and put in the fridge until needed – up to 24 hours. The easiest way to reheat is to wrap them in foil and put on a baking tray in the oven (190°C/375°F/gas mark 5) until piping hot.
- You may wish to provide packs of rolls for each client to take home.

Shopping list for session on burgers

For a class of 8

4kg lean mince (choose from beef, turkey, lamb etc.) (500g per group member)

8 onions

8 carrots

1 can sweetcorn

4 mixed peppers

small bag baby peas (allow to defrost before using)

1 punnet mushrooms

8 eggs

homemade breadcrumbs

a selection of seasonings – garlic, chilli powder, fresh parsley, dried herbs, Worcester sauce, soy sauce etc.
8 rolls for class to eat during session (take along a variety)
8 packs of rolls for the group to take home with their burgers
1 jar of tomato relish
1 iceberg lettuce for salad
a few tomatoes for slicing
2 red onions
small piece of cucumber
packet of frozen/economy burgers for comparison

Accessories

Tea, coffee, juice and milk for the break.
Make sure you have a baking tray for each client.
Containers for taking burgers etc. home.

Chicken fajitas with couscous and salsa

Chicken fajitas

What you need to make this at home

1 chicken breast
lettuce for shredding e.g. little gem
½ carton low fat crème fraiche or soured cream (higher in fat)
½ red pepper
½ green pepper
1 small onion
1 clove garlic
a few mushrooms
3–4 tortillas
1 tablespoon oil

What you do

- Wash and shred lettuce and keep to one side.
- Wash and cut peppers into thin strips.
- Peel and chop onions.
- Peel and crush garlic clove.
- Clean and slice mushrooms.
- Slice chicken breast into thin strips.
- Heat wok or large deep-sided pan, add a tablespoon of oil and heat over a medium heat for a few seconds.
- Add the onion and garlic and stir for 2 minutes.
- Add the chicken strips and cook for a few minutes.
- Add chopped peppers and mushrooms.
- Continue to cook until chicken is cooked through and vegetables are tender (8–10 minutes, but this will depend on the size of the pan and thickness of meat).
- Warm tortillas as per the instructions on the packet.
- **To serve:** Place some of the chicken stir fry on to a warmed tortilla, top with a spoonful of salsa and some low fat crème fraiche. Add some shredded lettuce. Roll up and enjoy.

Couscous

What you need to make this at home

200g couscous
400ml vegetable stock

To make vegetable couscous

1 or 2 tomatoes

½ cucumber
a few spring onions
½ red pepper
½ green or yellow pepper

To make roasted Mediterranean vegetable couscous

½ red pepper
½ green or yellow pepper
1 red onion
2 cloves garlic
1 courgette
½ aubergine
1 dessertspoon olive oil

What you do

- Place 200g couscous in a large bowl.
- Add 400ml vegetable stock made up with boiling water, stir, cover and leave to stand for 5–10 minutes until the stock is completely soaked in.

If making vegetable couscous:

- Wash and finely dice cucumber, tomatoes, mixed peppers and spring onion and add to couscous once it is cool.
- Mix well and serve.

If making roasted Mediterranean vegetable couscous:

- Preheat oven to 180°C.
- Wash and chop vegetables finely.
- Toss in the olive oil and add to an oven tray.
- Roast in the oven until tender (20-30 minutes), stirring halfway through to ensure even cooking and prevent sticking.
- Remove from the oven and add to warm couscous.
- Mix well and serve.

Salsa

What you need to make this at home

1 green chilli pepper or ½ teaspoon chilli powder
200g can chopped tomatoes
juice of 1 lime
chopped fresh coriander
1 clove garlic
1 small onion
¼ tube tomato puree

What you do

- Wash and finely chop onion.
- Press or chop garlic and put in a bowl with the chopped onion.
- If using fresh chilli, deseed and chop finely then add to the bowl. Remember to wash your hands well after chopping and not to rub your eyes.
- Add tinned tomatoes, chilli powder (if not using fresh chilli) and stir well.
- Serve with chicken fajitas or on its own as a dip.

Shopping list for session on chicken fajitas, couscous and salsa

For a class of 8

Chicken fajitas

1 chicken breast per group member
iceberg lettuce for shredding e.g. little gem
low fat crème fraiche or soured cream (higher in fat)
4 red peppers
4 green peppers
8 small onions
2 garlic bulbs
1 packet mushrooms
3 or 4 tortillas per class member

Salsa

8 green chillies
4 x 200g tins chopped tomatoes
8 limes
1 tube tomato puree
8 small onions
fresh coriander

Vegetable couscous

4 x 500g packets couscous
1 tin vegetable stock powder
8–16 tomatoes depending on size
2 bunches spring onions
4 cucumbers
8 mixed peppers

Or alternatively:

Roasted Mediterranean vegetables

4 x 500g packets couscous
1 tin vegetable stock powder
8 mixed peppers
8 red onions

2 bulbs garlic
8 small courgettes
4 aubergines
olive oil
lemon juice
bunch chopped parsley (optional)

Points to make

For teaching points refer to notes on main healthy eating.

Additional teaching points from the sessions on Stir Fry and Dips will be relevant to this recipe.

Healthy sandwiches

Session plan

A session on making healthy sandwiches can be a useful activity both as an add-on session with a cooking group and also as a one-off workshop with participants of all ages.

As a very popular choice for lunches, many people will grab a pre-packed sandwich from their local supermarket or garage, and often these can be extremely high in fat and the cost can be very high.

Sandwiches can, however, be a very healthy and balanced lunch or snack if we use low fat fillings and fill up with lots of salad or vegetables.

Many of our favourite sandwich fillings can be high in fat and calories as they have lots of mayonnaise, but even these can be made healthier without compromising on the taste.

This session will encourage participants to try new fillings, vary the types of bread and rolls that they're using and add extra salad or vegetables to their sandwiches. The session focuses on two popular sandwich fillings (savoury cheese and coronation chicken) which would traditionally be very high in fat and calories. It also gives the group a chance to experiment with other fillings, adding salad vegetables to prepare tasty and healthy snacks or lunches.

Equipment required for session

- vegetable knives
- chopping boards
- knives for spreading
- dessert spoons / teaspoons
- colanders for washing salad and vegetables
- bowls
- paper plates for fillings
- disposable plates or sandwich platters
- graters
- disposable aprons
- washing up liquid and cleaning cloths
- cling film
- anti-bacterial spray

Setting up

Set up the class with tables in the middle to let everyone work together, facilitate demonstration and allow conversation and sharing of ideas.

Lay out chopping boards, cutlery and aprons.

Lay out different types of bread, fillings etc. on a separate table accessible for participants to go and choose from.

Lay one slice/roll and a sample of each of the fillings out on the centre of the table where the group will be working and place them on the Eatwell mat.

Ensure the kitchen area has adequate hot water, soap, washing-up liquid etc.

Points to make

After everyone has washed their hands and put on aprons, introduce the session by looking at the Eatwell mat with the ingredients laid out. (If using this session as a one-off workshop then it will be preferable to have covered the Eatwell Plate either in a previous session or at the beginning of this session.)

Taking each section of the mat one at a time discuss the ingredients displayed:

Fruit and vegetables: Lettuce (a couple of varieties), mustard and cress, tomatoes (a couple of varieties to compare taste), cucumber, carrot (could be grated and added as a sandwich filling), peppers, red onion and spring onions, dried apricots, sultanas.

Discuss the benefits of adding lots of salad to sandwiches – adds vitamins and fibre, can contribute to 5 a day, makes sandwiches moist thus reducing or removing the need for margarine.

Bread, other cereals and potatoes: White bread and rolls, wholemeal bread and rolls, multi grain, rye, bagels, pitta bread, tortilla wraps.

Discuss the benefits of eating a variety of different types of bread and rolls, highlighting the benefits of wholemeal and wholegrain to increase fibre.

Meat, fish and alternatives: Cooked chicken breast, lean cooked ham, canned tuna and salmon, flaked almonds.

Highlight the benefits of choosing lean varieties of cooked meats and always removing the skin from chicken.

Discuss the benefit of canned salmon in the target of achieving a portion of oily fish each week.

Adding nuts to a sandwich filling (as in the coronation chicken) will add some protein.

Milk and dairy products: Natural yoghurt, mature cheese for plenty of flavour in a small portion, lower fat varieties of cheese e.g. Edam.

Discuss the benefit of using a more mature cheddar cheese as this will give a strong taste using less cheese. Also highlight the benefit of grating cheese as this uses less.

While cheese is high in fat it is good to vary the varieties used as there can be a significant reduction in fat content according to variety. For instance, cheddar is approximately 33% fat whereas Edam is around 23% fat.

Reduce fat and sugar: Low fat polyunsaturated or monounsaturated spread, low fat or very low fat variety of mayonnaise.

Highlight the need to limit use of margarines/spreads and to use only a little where required. Discuss alternatives e.g. juicy vegetables or salad to add moisture to sandwiches and rolls. Where mayonnaise or yoghurt dressings are included in the filling there's no need for additional margarine.

Also discuss the different varieties of mayonnaise and salad creams that are available. Some are as low as 5% fat, which is a significant saving on full fat versions.

Variety: The group will prepare their own healthier versions of coronation chicken and savoury cheese sandwich fillings and these should be prepared first. Once the fillings are ready, introduce the group to the different types of bread and rolls and to the variety of salad vegetables available for their fillings and encourage them to select a variety of different types to include.

Emphasise the importance of using different colours of vegetables not only to add vitamins, minerals and fibre but also to make the sandwich platter look more appealing – we're more likely to want to eat food that looks attractive.

Safety and hygiene: If necessary for this group, demonstrate safe techniques for chopping the vegetables and remind everyone that all salad vegetables should be washed before use.

Prepare a platter: Get everyone to make up a platter of sandwiches using their chosen healthy fillings including the ones they have prepared earlier and encourage the use of lots of salad and minimal amounts of margarine (where fillings contain mayonnaise or yoghurt then no margarine will be required.)

Safe storage: Ensure that everyone is aware of the need to keep their sandwich platters covered with cling film and refrigerated at all times. Remind them that the sandwiches will keep fresh in the fridge for 24 hours but are best eaten on the day they're made.

Shopping list for session on healthy sandwiches

For a class of 8

For coronation chicken filling

8 cooked chicken breasts
250g pack dried apricots
packet flaked almonds
500ml pot natural yoghurt
500g jar light mayonnaise
4 teaspoons mild curry powder

For savoury cheese filling

800g – 1kg mature cheddar cheese
8 small carrots
8 small red onions or 16 spring onions
500g jar of light mayonnaise
500ml pot natural yoghurt

Other possibilities

8 eggs for hard boiling
selection of lean cooked meats, e.g. ham, turkey
canned tuna and canned salmon
cheese for grating – could try some lower fat varieties
black pepper for seasoning
250g tub polyunsaturated or monounsaturated spread (not necessary if using yoghurt/mayo mix)

Salad vegetables

1 iceberg lettuce
8 tomatoes for slicing, and packet cherry tomatoes
1 pot mustard and cress
8 carrots (clients grate ½ carrot then make other ½ into carrot batons)
1 cucumber

1 bunch celery sticks
4 mixed peppers

Bread

Try to include a variety of bread and rolls in this activity
As a guide 1 medium loaf will give 14–16 slices (so 7–8 sandwiches)
4–5 loaves will be needed to allow each client to fill their own sandwich platter
Try to include wholemeal, granary or 50:50 varieties
You could also use a selection of rolls, bagels and wraps, in which case reduce the number of loaves

Accessories

8 foil platters (available from most supermarkets in packs of 3 or 4)
Cling film or large tie-handle poly bags to cover

Coronation chicken

What you need

Quantities for a family

1 cooked chicken breast (skin removed)
4 or 5 dried apricots
2 teaspoons flaked almonds
3 dessertspoons natural yoghurt
2 dessertspoons light or extra light mayonnaise
½ teaspoon curry powder (more or less to taste)

What you do

- Chop up the cooked chicken and dried apricots into small pieces.
- In a bowl combine the yoghurt, mayonnaise and curry powder.
- Add the chicken, apricots and flaked almonds and stir well.
- Cover and refrigerate until required.

Savoury cheese

What you need

Quantities for a family

100–150g mature cheddar cheese
1 small carrot
small red onion or spring onions
3 dessertspoons natural yoghurt
2 dessertspoons light or extra light mayonnaise

What you do

- Grate cheese and peel and grate carrot.
- Peel and finely chop the red onion or chop the spring onions finely and add to a bowl with the grated cheese and carrot.
- Add the yoghurt and mayonnaise and mix well.
- Cover and refrigerate until required.

Lemon and lime crispy salmon steaks/fillets

What you need to make this at home

2 skinless salmon steaks/fillets (frozen can often be cheaper)
1 lemon
1 lime
1 egg, beaten
a few spoonfuls of plain flour
a small bowl of breadcrumbs (homemade)
a little oil or margarine to grease a baking tray
black pepper to taste

What you do

- Heat the oven to 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6.
- Put the beaten egg and flour into 2 separate bowls/plates.
- Grate or blend the bread into crumbs and put into a bowl (could use pre-prepared or a mixture of both).
- Finely grate the rind of the lemon and the lime and mix well with the breadcrumbs. Add black pepper to taste.
- Dip the salmon steaks into the flour and then the egg and finally the breadcrumbs.
- Put the coated salmon steaks onto a well-greased baking tray and bake for 15–20 minutes, turning halfway through, until golden brown.

Shopping list for session on lemon and lime crispy salmon steaks/fillets

For a class of 8

16 skinless salmon steaks/fillets (frozen can often be cheaper)
8 lemons
8 limes
8 eggs
small bag of plain flour
breadcrumbs (home prepared with a grater or blender or shop bought or a mixture of both)
small amount of vegetable oil for greasing trays
black pepper

Points to make

For teaching points refer to the notes on main healthy eating.

Additional teaching points from the session on Chicken / Fish dippers will be relevant to this recipe.

Quick tuna pasta

What you need to make this at home

1 teacup pasta shapes
1 teacup wholemeal pasta shapes
1 tin tuna chunks/steaks in spring water or brine
1 onion
1 tin chopped tomatoes
¼ tube tomato puree
1 yellow pepper
1 green pepper
1 small tin sweetcorn, drained
black pepper to taste

What you do

- Put the pasta into a pan, cover with water and put on to boil. When boiling turn down and simmer until just tender. Check the packet for cooking times. The wholemeal pasta may take a little longer to cook so may need to be added first.
- While pasta is simmering, peel and finely chop the onion and peppers and add to another pan with the tinned tomatoes, tomato puree and black pepper. Heat gently and simmer for about 10 minutes, stirring frequently.
- Drain the pasta and add to the tomato sauce.
- Add the tuna and sweetcorn, stir well until tuna has heated through, and serve.

Shopping list for session on quick tuna pasta

For a class of 8

1kg pasta shapes
1kg wholemeal pasta shapes
8 tins tuna chunks/ steaks in spring water or brine
8 onions
8 tins chopped tomatoes
2 tubes tomato puree
8 yellow peppers
8 green peppers
8 small tins sweetcorn
black pepper

Points to make

For teaching points refer to notes on main healthy eating.

Additional teaching points from the session on very quick one pot pasta will be relevant to this recipe.

Soup ideas

This session was developed as an extra activity to consolidate and reinforce cooking skills learned during an 8-week course.

Homemade soups are very nutritious, cheap and very quick and easy to make. This session is an opportunity to reinforce basic principles of soup making and encourages participants to experiment with different combinations of vegetables.

Making a pot of soup is an ideal group activity which can be used to encourage people to try different ingredients. It demonstrates that by using a few basic principles there is no need to follow a recipe.

Equipment

You'll need suitably sized saucepans, wooden spoons, chopping boards, graters and small vegetable knives and peelers. Packets of plastic spoons are handy to encourage tasting among the group and encourage good food hygiene practice – only use each spoon once.

Stick blenders are very useful: pureeing soups can often be a simple method of encouraging people who perhaps have previously been reluctant, to try vegetables – especially useful for families and young children.

Basic soup principles

Start by gently cooking some chopped onion, using 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil over a low heat for a few minutes, being careful not to brown onions.

Add peeled and chopped vegetables of choice, cook for a few minutes then cover with vegetable stock made with boiling water and stock cubes/bouillon as directed on packet.

Cover saucepan and simmer gently until all vegetables are soft (about 20 minutes).

If pureeing soup with hand-held blender allow to cool a little first.

Don't add any extra salt as this is already present in stock cubes/bouillon.

Black pepper can be used for seasoning together with dried or fresh herbs such as parsley.

NOTE: The very low fat method, which omits cooking the chopped onions in a little oil, just adds the chopped onions and chopped vegetables to the saucepan with the stock.

What you need

As a rough guide use:

- 1 part chopped onion
- 3 parts chopped vegetables
- 4 parts stock

Suggestions:

carrots
parsnips (parsnip and apple is a good combination – try adding a pinch of curry powder to taste)
cauliflower
leek and potato
mushrooms (try a little garlic and dash of soy sauce)

carrot, swede, canned chopped tomatoes
broccoli
canned chopped tomatoes
leeks
frozen vegetables
celery

Extra items: offer a choice

dried pasta
dried lentils
spices such as curry/chilli powder – advise people to try mixing a little of the soup separately
with spice first to see if they like it
dried herbs
tomato puree
canned chopped tomatoes
canned beans e.g. cannellini, borlotti

For convenience:

Try using different canned soups as a base, adding whatever extra vegetables or pasta you have to hand.

Ready Steady Soup – an idea for a fun group activity

Depending on the numbers in the group, make up a number of soup bags all with different combinations of ingredients.

The idea is that everyone selects a bag and makes soup with the given ingredients.

Lay the soup bags out on a table in front of the group and have another section with extra items as above for anyone to use.

Idea 1: Have the bags numbered and then ask questions (e.g. based on healthy eating – see healthy eating quiz for suggested questions). The first one to answer gets the first choice of bags and so on.

Idea 2: Allocate bags by drawing out numbers from a hat.

Idea 3: Have a question linked to the particular soup bag that each person has requested.

Advantages: Allows participants to make and try a variety of different soups in one session and for everyone to be able to taste a range of different soups.

Tasting: Remember to give everyone several disposable spoons and encourage tasting of each other's soup.

Smoothies

Smoothies can be a useful way to encourage people who are otherwise reluctant, to try fruit.

What is a smoothie?

True smoothies are traditionally 100% fruit and produced by blending the whole peeled fruit.

There is no legal definition of a smoothie, but it should be defined as 100% pure and adopt the same guidelines as 100% pure juice.

If anything is added to dilute or enhance and is not pure fruit, the result should be labelled as a 'smoothie drink'.

What to use

Fruits: A variety of fresh fruits are suitable, including those that are slightly overripe. Peel off skins for a smoother smoothie.

Canned fruits are suitable for smoothies. Try to use canned fruits in juice, but if you use fruit in syrup then wash off the syrup using a sieve and cold water. A can of fruit in syrup contains 8–12 teaspoons of added sugar!

Note some ready-frozen fruits (e.g. summer fruits) are also suitable, but read the labels - some are sprayed with a sugar syrup before being frozen.

Try freezing some of the fruits to make a cool smoothie: this is also a good idea if fruit is left over and ripening too fast. Most are suitable for freezing, even chopped banana (use up within a month though for best results).

Liquids: Pure fruit juices such as apple, pineapple or orange are suitable. You can use supermarkets' own value/smart price ranges – look for 'pure unsweetened'. Any thing that says 'juice drink' is not pure juice, it will be some juice diluted with water and then either sugar or artificial sweetener added.

Or you can use semi-skimmed milk, with or without some natural yoghurt.

Equipment

Jug blenders (1 or 1½ litre) are ideal and reasonably cheap to purchase. They're easier to clean than machines advertised as smoothie makers.

If you're going to add ice to smoothies it's best to use a glass jug blender.

See notes on the safe use of blenders.

What you need

1 can fruit in juice
150–200g fresh/frozen chopped fruit
500ml liquid

What you do

- Put all the fruit into the jug of the blender then add liquid, being careful not to exceed max level on jug.
- Replace the lid and make sure it is closed correctly.
- Switch on and blend for 2–3 minutes.
- Serve in tumblers with straws.

Smoothie ideas

The following are some recipes tried and tested, but it's much more fun to make up your own.

The first four recipes were created by Primary 6 pupils from Ardeer Primary School in Stevenston, North Ayrshire.

Tropical feast

4 ripe kiwis, peeled, chopped then frozen
1 small tin pineapple in juice
1 chopped banana
500ml pure apple juice

Super apricot and peachy passion

1 tin sliced peaches in juice
1 tin apricots drained then frozen
250ml natural yoghurt
250ml semi-skimmed milk

Fruit explosion

½ tin pears
½ packet frozen summer fruit
150ml washed blueberries
250ml natural yoghurt
250ml semi-skimmed milk

Avalanche

½ banana, peeled and chopped
½ mango, peeled and chopped
2 cups frozen strawberries
500ml apple juice

Tropical paradise

can sliced peaches in juice
150–200g frozen tropical fruit
500ml unsweetened orange juice

Very berry smoothie

1 banana, chopped
250g frozen summer fruits
150ml unsweetened apple juice
300ml semi-skimmed milk

Session plan

For a smoothie-making session, have a maximum of four groups or teams of 4–5 people. If there are any more than this, deliver a demonstration (with some audience participation) rather than a hands-on smoothie 'workshop' session.

Prior to delivering a workshop, check out the safety aspect of sockets near tables etc in the room you plan to use.

Equipment

Cool box – have items ideally frozen or well refrigerated prior to the session if delivering a smoothie workshop.

For each group:

blender or smoothie machine (must be PAT-tested prior to use)
safety notice for use of the machine
measuring jug
knife, spoons
chopping board
plastic cups (clear if possible to see colours of smoothies)
plastic spoons (to allow tasting during the process)
straws/straw dispenser
'smoothie making session sheets' to write up their recipes (see example, page 110)
pens/pencils

If you're delivering as a 'tasting' session and/or demonstration, ideally have this basic kit with perhaps only 2 blenders being necessary (to demonstrate one juice, one milk smoothie without having to wash up in between). Also have some washing up liquid, cloths, extension cables which have been PAT-tested, a tin opener and supply of freezer bags for preparation.

Shopping list for a smoothie workshop

Each 1 litre blender will yield 6–10 servings/tastings depending on how generous you want to be.

You need 500ml liquid and 2–3 portions of fruit (with optional yogurt) to yield one litre.

Liquid: Have a selection of 1 litre cartons of pure juices, milk and natural yogurt. Ensure these are all well chilled. The recipes should include 500ml of liquid (all milk, all juice, milk and yogurt, yogurt alone if using tinned fruit in juice, or a combination of juice and milk). Experimentation is the name of the game!

Fruit: This depends on what's in season and the abilities/age of the group to prepare the fruit. Half the selection you intend to take should be prepared and frozen in advance. This ensures your smoothies will be cold without the need to add ice. So wash, trim, chop and bag fruit in quantities of roughly a cupful prior to freezing. The fruit can be fresh, tinned fruit in its own juice or frozen (just be aware some frozen fruits are sprayed with sugar – avoid these by

making your own). The adventurous may also want to try some dried fruits – apricots and coconut have been added in some recipes.

Key messages

A healthy balance: Have a discussion around fruit and vegetables and their place in the Eatwell Plate. Play the Eatwell Plate game at the start of the session if you have time.

5 a day needed:

- reduce our risk of heart disease and stroke,
- prevents constipation,
- an essential source of antioxidants,
- we need vitamin C daily as the body can't store it.

Be creative! Once this introduction has been done, ask questions to the teams around the introduction points to see what they have remembered (see healthy eating quiz). 'Winning teams' who answer a question correctly can choose a smoothie ingredient for their team (strawberries always go first!). Ensure each team has 500ml liquid and 2–3 portions of fruit with yoghurt as an optional extra. Then let them create – adding ingredients, tasting, correcting, negotiating with other groups for an ingredient they don't have and eventually writing up their recipe and naming their unique smoothie!

Lastly, gather all the groups together and tour each group sampling their smoothies!

For a demonstration and/or tasting session

Choose your recipes and obviously multiply your ingredients up by the number attending and shop/prepare accordingly. Ask your audience to taste one milk-based and one juice-based smoothie to see what they prefer.

Audience participation helps in 'voting' in certain ingredients/additions to create their smoothie.

Using blenders safely with groups

These notes are intended as risk assessment for workers using the blenders. The risk is Low providing the following notes are adhered to.

Blenders should be PAT-tested (portable appliance tested) by an appropriate organisation.

Children should not operate the blender unless under close supervision of the worker and then only with controlled guidance. (See the following page for separate safety guidance notes to use in activities with children.)

Before using, wash both the jug and lid thoroughly in hot soapy water even though it may look clean. Rinse and dry.

Do not allow any of the electrical parts (base, plug etc.) to get wet and never submerge the base in water.

Prevent electrical shocks by ensuring that users never operate the machine with wet hands or use on wet or damp surfaces.

If the PAT-tested extension reel is required it must be fully unwound and extreme care taken in locating excess cable and connection to a socket in such a way as to prevent it being a trip hazard to the public/users.

Never leave the machine unattended while connected to a power source.

Take care when plugging in or unplugging the machine – make sure your fingers don't touch the plug pins to avoid electrical shock.

When using do not fill the jug completely and do not process hot liquids or food.

Ensure lid is correctly fitted before starting machine.

To start blending, PULSE the machine at least twice before selecting speed.

Never remove lid before the blade has completely stopped turning.

Do not use forks, knives etc. to break up food in jug. Use only a plastic spatula and then only when the machine is switched off at the power outlet and the blades are not turning.

Unplug from socket when not in use and before attempting to clean machine.

The base can only be wiped with a clean damp cloth and then dried.

Thoroughly wash jug and lid again in hot soapy water then rinse. Pay attention to the lids which can be difficult to clean and could harbour bacteria. Remember the blades are very sharp and care should be taken to avoid accidents when cleaning.

Do not use if the power supply cord is damaged or the base has been dropped.

Using the blender for smoothie making

- Do not plug machine in until you are told to do so.
- Fit the jug correctly to the base.
- Add the chopped up fruit to the jug.
- Add the liquid making sure you **DO NOT** fill the jug beyond the max level, i.e. 1 litre.
- Place the lid on the jug and turn to lock position. **It is important to make sure the lid is correctly locked.** Ask for this to be checked the first time you do this.
- Then the machine can be plugged in and switched on to the lowest position first while holding the lid in place with one hand (to make sure lid is in correct closed position). Only then can the speed be increased.
- Allow contents to blend for a few moments. If the blending is not performed quickly **SWITCH OFF** the machine & **also at plug before** removing the lid. Then stir the ingredients with a spoon or spatula, and then repeat above process.
- ***NEVER PUT YOUR HAND OR ANY OTHER OBJECT IN THE BLENDER WHILE IT IS SWITCHED ON.***



Smoothie Making Sessions

Group:	
Names:	
We named our smoothie:	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 5px;"> We used: Ingredient </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 5px;"> How much? </div>
Our comments:	

Healthy eating quiz

These are good questions to use at a Ready Steady Soup or Smoothie session if there's time, or for a fun quiz session

Choose questions that are suitable for your group

Make brief comments around answers to reinforce the message

- **Why is it important to eat a healthy diet?**

Better quality of life now – feel good, look good; prevent/protect against some illnesses, heart disease, some cancers, essential for growth and development, energy. (Could liken our body to the car – needs fuel)

- **Do you know what is meant by 'diet'?**

What we eat everyday, not just to lose weight. We want to encourage a healthier diet for everyone -- there are no good foods or bad foods!

- **What do you think healthy eating is?**

Eating lots of fruit and veg, basing meals on bread, cereals, rice, pasta, potatoes, cutting down on food with lots of sugar, fat, salt. (Eatwell Plate)

- **How many portions of fruit and veg a day should you eat?**

Five. Choose a rainbow of colours every day!

- **Does fresh fruit juice count as a portion?**

Yes, a small glass and only once per day counts because no fibre is included in juice

- **How big is a portion of fruit or vegetables?**

Handful – big handful for a big person, small handful for a child – give examples

- **Which of the following do fruit and vegetables contain: vitamins, minerals, fibre?**

All 3

- **Can you name two foods that are high in sugar that we also need to eat less often?**

Sweets, biscuits, sugar, chocolate, jam, cakes and puddings, jelly

- **Name two drinks that are high in sugar?**

Most soft drinks – cola, irln bru, lemonade, ordinary squash – although diet drinks are also very acidic so they are just as bad for damaging teeth (erosion of enamel)

- **As well as a healthy diet you should also drink plenty of water. How much per day?**

1½–2 litres a day

- **Name two other drinks that are healthier**

Milk, pure juices (for children dilute half and half with water)

- **Why do you think is it important not to skip breakfast?**

Need energy – the body has been using up resources while you sleep. Without breakfast you're more likely to snack on junk food, think more slowly, doze off, find it hard to concentrate, do worse work at school

- **What would make a healthy breakfast?**
Fruit juice or fruit, cereal, bread/roll/toast, yoghurt
 - **What kinds of breakfast cereal are best?**
Wholegrain, not sugar coated, e.g. Weetabix, porridge oats, shredded wheat, plain puffed wheat
 - **Name two foods that are very high in fat that we should be cutting down on?**
Pies, sausage rolls, butter/margarine, chips, cooking oils, chocolate, cream, biscuits, pastries, crisps, ice cream
 - **Can you name a healthier cooking method than frying for eggs?**
Poaching, scrambled, omelette (other foods often have alternative cooking methods too)
 - **Can you think of three fruits beginning with letter 'p'?**
Plum, peach, pear, prune, passion fruit, pineapple
 - **Can you name 3 vegetables beginning with letter 'c'?**
Carrot, cauliflower, cabbage, courgette, cucumber
 - **Can you name one type of flour used in baking and breadmaking?**
Wholemeal (made from 100% grain), brown (contains 85% of original grain but some bran and germ have been removed) and white (made from central section of grain) – also granary, multigrain, rye, etc
 - **Which sort of flour is better for you and why?**
Wholemeal – it contains the whole grain so more goodness and high in fibre
 - **Which are better for you, thin or thick chips?**
Thick – their surface area is less than thin chips, so they absorb less of the cooking fat
- If the group has been learning about the Eatwell Plate, you could include these questions:*
- **What is the healthy eating model with the 5 food groups called?**
 - **Ask the group to name the section – have the names covered over**
 - **Which group of foods should we eat for energy?**
Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods, e.g. cereals
 - **Name 4 different foods that belong to the pink section.**
Meat, chicken, fish, eggs, nuts, seeds, pulses – beans, peas, lentils
 - **If they didn't say eggs, what group do eggs belong to?**
Meat fish eggs and beans
 - **Why do we need to include alternatives?**
An alternative source of protein for vegetarians etc
 - **What foods are in the dairy group?**
Milk, cheese and yogurt. Most other 'dairy' foods are in the 'foods high in fat or sugar' group – butter, cream, crème fraiche, ice cream.