Cooking is a SNAP

University of Minnesota Extension

Overview

Cooking is a SNAP is a direct education intervention designed to (1) increase fruit and vegetable consumption; (2) increase confidence to plan and prepare meals at home and (3) move 30 minutes a day, most days of the week. Cooking is a SNAP is a culinary nutrition education curriculum. The curriculum consists of six 2-hour sessions with nutrition content derived from the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans incorporating the USDA’s MyPlate materials. Physical activity content is from the 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd edition and the 2016 National Physical Activity Plan. Culinary skills and basic cooking techniques have been modified from school food service materials developed by the University of Minnesota Extension. Cooking is a SNAP incorporates the social-cognitive theory of change where learning occurs in a social context with dynamic and reciprocal interactions of the person, environment, and behavior. Central to this theory, Cooking is a SNAP is designed as a hands-on, interactive curriculum where the leaders model the skills and behaviors they are teaching. **Target Behavior:** Healthy Eating, Physical Activity, Food Insecurity/Food Assistance  **Intervention Type:** Direct Education

Intervention Reach and Adoption

Cooking is a SNAP targets adults in community settings. Cooking is a SNAP was developed in response to focus groups of SNAP-Ed eligible people who had not participated in SNAP-Ed asking for a fun, social atmosphere in which to learn to cook. It has been piloted and evaluated in SNAP-Ed programs in Minnesota and North Dakota since 2011. **Setting:** Community, Faith-based community  **Target Audience:** Breastfeeding Women, Parents/Mothers/Fathers, Adults, Older Adults  **Race/Ethnicity:** No special focus

Intervention Components
The curriculum is designed to be delivered by a nutrition educator in partnership with a community agency. The primary selection criteria is: the site must have a full kitchen including a refrigerator, stove, oven, and counter space for food preparation. Partner agencies assist with recruitment of adult participants and with securing an appropriate space with kitchen for conducting the class. Each lesson contains the following activities which, following focus group and pilot development, most effectively create a positive environment for change:

1. Review and introduction; Icebreakers and introductory knowledge assessments
2. Cooking; Food preparation and safety skill development
3. Clean-up and tasting; Food safety and sanitation skills/knowledge development
4. Nutrition education; Discussions around Dietary Guidelines, MyPlate, participant questions
5. Smart shopping; Meal planning, budgeting and purchasing strategies
6. Physical activity; Family and individual activity planning
7. Action planning; Journaling, self-reflections and goal setting

Intervention Materials

Available materials include:
- Leader’s Guide with introduction and 6 sessions that include preparation checklists, leader instructions, time allocation chart, script, recipes, and activities for each session segment: Introduction, cook and taste, MyPlate nutrition education, smart shopping, physical activity, and action planning.
- Participant workbook with reinforcement handouts for cooking, nutrition and food safety, recipes, smart shopping, physical activity, and action planning.

Training and materials are available here.

Intervention Costs

Fee for online training for leaders. Materials are available at no cost for leaders who complete the online training. More information, access to the training, and materials are available here.

Evidence Summary

The most significant result was an increase in fruit and vegetable consumption; in the pre-survey, most of the participants (35 of 51 or 68.6%) reported eating 1 cup or less of fruits and vegetables on most days. In the pre-survey, the average amount of fruit consumption was 0.76 cup and the average amount of vegetable consumption was 0.94 cup. After the class, more than half (about 30 of 51 or 58.8%) reported eating more than 1 1/2 cups of fruit and vegetables on most days. In the post-survey, the average amount of fruit consumption was 1.43 cup and the average amount of vegetable consumption was 1.53 cup. The average increase in fruit consumption was 0.67 cup and in vegetable consumption was 0.59 cup. Positive behavior changes detected in fruit/vegetable consumption, confidence in planning and preparation of healthy meals at home, and confidence in shopping for healthy foods in a grocery store (p<.001). Increased consideration of nutritional content during food preparation was also detected (p<.01). Evidence-based Approach: Practice-tested
Evaluation Indicators

Based on the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework, the following outcome indicators can be used to evaluate intervention progress and success.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Readiness and Capacity – Short Term (ST)</th>
<th>Changes – Medium Term (MT)</th>
<th>Effectiveness and Maintenance – Long Term (LT)</th>
<th>Population Results (R)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>MT1, MT2, MT3, MT4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Settings</td>
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<td>Sectors of Influence</td>
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- MT1l: “I eat ___ cups of fruit most days” significantly increased (p<.001) between pre and post.
- Mt1m: “I eat ___ cups of vegetables most days” significantly increased (p<.001) between pre and post.
- MT1j: “At least half of the grains I eat are whole grains” increased between pre and post but was not statistically significant (p>.05).
- MT2a: “I am confident in my ability to shop for healthy foods in the grocery store” significantly increased (p<.001) between pre and post.
- MT2h: “I compare prices when I shop” increased between pre and post but was not statistically significant (p>.05).
- MT2j: “I use a list when I grocery shop” significantly increased (p<.05) between pre and post.
- MT2m: “I am confident in my ability to prepare a healthy meal for my family” significantly increased (p<.001) between pre and post.
- MT3a: “I am physically active for 30 minutes a day” significantly increased (p<.05) between pre and post.
- MT4a: “I am confident in my ability to clean and prepare my kitchen for cooking” significantly increased (p<.05) between pre and post.

Evaluation Materials

Evaluation tools include pre and post-intervention participant surveys and an intervention fidelity checklist. These tools are available as part of the training and curriculum on the website.

Additional Information

Website: The [Cooking is a SNAP website](https://snapedtoolkit.org/interventions/programs/cooking-is-a-snap/) includes a description of the curriculum, online training for using the curriculum, the curriculum itself, evaluation materials and recipes. Contact Person: Betsy Johnson, MPH University of Minnesota Extension, Center for Family Development john3064@umn.edu 218-259-1402