



Food Skills Questionnaire

What are food skills and why does it matter?

Food skills are necessary for people who provide and prepare nutritious meals for themselves and their households. Food skills consist of:

- **Knowledge** (about nutrition for good health, interpreting food labels, following/understanding instructions, ingredients and recipes, food safety, awareness of food origins and characteristics, and growing foods if possible);
- **Planning** (organize meals, budget for food, shopping and storage);
- **Techniques** (food preparation including using cooking utensils and appliances, handling food ingredients).

Please answer Yes (Y), No (N) or Sometimes (S) to the question.

Key messages and resources (see list below) are suggested for each section.

Healthy Eating

Questions	Answer	Key Messages	Resources
I use nutrition labels to help make the healthiest choice		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrition labels give information about nutrients, ingredients and health claims. • Use the % Daily Value (%DV) to compare food products and see if a product has a little or a lot of a nutrient. • Use food labels to help you choose foods with less sugar, salt and fat, and with more fibre. 	1
I know how to store fresh food		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put all perishables in the fridge or freezer within 2 hours of buying or preparing. 	2
I know how to thaw food safely		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thaw food in the refrigerator and not on the counter. • You can also thaw in the microwave if you need to cook it right away. 	3 4
I know how long I can keep food in the fridge and freezer		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storing vegetables and fruit the right way will help it stay fresh longer. • Label the container of food with the date before freezing. 	
I know how long I can keep canned and boxed food in the cupboard		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the expiry date on cans and boxes. 	
I wash my hands before and after cooking		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washing hands with soap and water is easy to do and it is one of the best ways to stop germs from spreading. 	5
My family eats meals together		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan regular meals and eat together as a family. • Eating together gives parents a chance to model healthy eating habits that will last a lifetime. 	6 7
My family eats meals without distractions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy time together without cell phones, tablets, TV, toys or other distractions. 	7 8

Meal Planning

Questions	Answer	Key Messages	Resources
<p>Do you plan what you are going to eat for supper?</p> <p>If No or Sometimes, why?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I don't have the time</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> It's too complicated</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> My family schedule is very hectic</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I don't know how to plan a menu (plan, shop, prepare)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> It's difficult for me to cook a meal that everyone will eat</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I don't know how to cook</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I don't like to cook</p>		<p>Suggested steps to meal planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at recipes on line, in cookbooks or in magazines to get new ideas and add variety to your meals. • Look through your fridge, freezer and cupboards to see what you have and what items you will need for the meals. • Make a shopping list and post it where it's easy to see. • Cook extra portions of meat and alternatives and vegetables and use the leftovers (for example, left over chicken can be used in a stir-fry or casserole). • Include children and teenagers in meal selection, shopping and food prep; this will teach them lifelong skills, give them confidence and they will be more likely to eat the foods. 	<p>4</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p>

Food Shopping

When I shop for groceries, I...	Answer	Key Messages	Resources
Use supermarket flyers or coupons to save money		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at flyers (also available online) to see what foods are on sale and use them to plan your meals. 	<p>4</p> <p>9</p>
Make a shopping list		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan meals according to what you have in your fridge, freezer and pantry. • It is best to stick to the shopping list to avoid impulse buying and avoid shopping hungry. 	<p>9</p>
Use unit price to compare costs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The unit price tells you the cost of an item per pound, kilogram or gram. • Compare prices of similar items of different brands and sizes. 	<p>4</p>
Take my child(ren) shopping		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shopping with your children can be hectic but it gives them a chance to learn more about food and they are more likely to eat foods they helped choose. • Have your children get foods on your list like vegetables and fruit. 	<p>16</p> <p>7</p>
Know the best buys by food group		<p>Save money by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buying fruits and vegetables in season. • Buying in bulk or no name brands. • Buying less expensive cuts of meat. • Buying frozen and canned vegetables, fruit, fish 	<p>9</p> <p>16</p>
I can easily get to stores that sell affordable fresh vegetables and fruits		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check if your neighbourhood has programs such as the Good Food Box or Market Mobile • Save time and money by shopping once a week and shop in supermarkets and discount stores if possible. 	<p>17</p>

Cooking Techniques

Question	Answer	Key Messages	Resources
I use recipes for cooking		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look at recipes on line, in cookbooks or in magazines to get new ideas and add variety to your meals. 	4 9 12
To cook, I use a:	Answer	Key Messages	Resources
Stove or hot plate			
Oven or toaster oven			
Microwave		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Microwaves are an easy and convenient way to prepare food or reheat leftovers. They do not affect the nutrients in food. 	18
Slow Cooker		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a slow cooker to prepare meals in advance to save time and stress. 	19
When I cook a supper meal, I include a serving of:	Answer	Key Messages	Resources
Vegetables and fruit		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan your meal by choosing a variety of foods. 	20 21
Rice, pasta or other grain			
Fish, chicken, meat, egg, lentils or beans			
A glass of milk, bowl of yogurt, or cheese			
I know how to	Answer	Key Messages	Resources
Make substitutions for items in a recipe		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you are missing an ingredient, you may have something else in your kitchen that can be used instead 	4 22
Use spices or herbs to flavour food		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add flavour without adding salt by using herbs and spices 	23
Handle a knife safely to prepare food (like cutting an onion)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knives are very important to prepare food. Be safe and enjoy cooking by learning how to handle a knife. 	24
Use beans, chickpeas, and other meat alternatives in a meal once a week		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dried or canned beans and lentils are inexpensive and have lots of protein 	25 4 26
Use leftovers in meals		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leftover meat can be used to make sandwiches, stir-fries and casseroles. Leftover vegetables can be used to make soup and salad. Make a double recipe when the ingredients are on sale. Put the extras in the freezer to eat at another time. 	9 4 27

Resources

1. [Using Nutrition Facts Table % DV](#)
2. [Food Safety](#)
3. [Food Handlers' Storage Guide](#)
4. [The Basic Shelf Cookbook](#)
5. [Ottawa's Health is in Your Hands](#)
6. [Managing Family Meals](#)
7. [Food Choices When Money is Tight](#)
8. [Family Meals With No TV](#)
9. [Everybody's Food Budget](#)
10. [Plan Your Own Menus](#)
11. [7 Steps for Quick and Easy Meal Planning](#)
12. [OPH Recipe Cards and Videos](#)
13. [Cooking with Kids](#)
14. [Cooking with Kids of Different Ages](#)
15. [Top 10 Easy Ways to Get Teens Cooking](#)
16. [Best Buys in the Grocery Store](#)
17. [Good Food Box](#)
18. [Microwave Cooking](#)
19. [Cooking Safely in Your Slow Cooker](#)
20. [Paint Your Plate](#)
21. [Canada's Food Guide](#)
22. [Ingredient Substitutions](#)
23. [Cooking with Herbs and Spices](#)
24. [Knife Handling and Safety](#)
25. [Try Legumes, You'll Love Them](#)
26. [All About Lentils](#)
27. [Loving Your Leftovers](#)

Adapted with permission from KFL&A Public Health, 2014