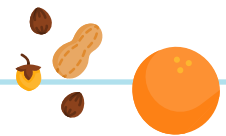
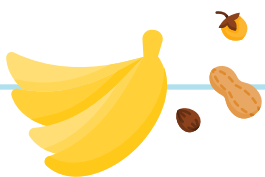


# Tips for Cooking with Kids and Teens

Preparing their own food can help children and teens learn about nutrition, practice meal planning, get to know other cultures, and build basic math skills.<sup>1</sup> It also encourages creativity and independence. Help your family cook safely and confidently with these kid-friendly cooking tips!

1. Talk about kitchen safety, such as care around hot surfaces and sharp tools — older children and adults might be able to help younger children with tasks that require more caution.
2. Consider adapted tools and utensils to make the cooking experience enjoyable and inclusive for family and friends.
3. Identify nutritious snacks your kids want to make and keep the ingredients in an easy-to-reach place to encourage healthy snacking. Help them cut or pre-cook ingredients as needed.
4. Have fun! When you have opportunities to cook with your young home “chef,” try learning a new recipe, let them pick background music, or share stories from your day.
5. Think of each person’s hand as a quick estimate for portioning different kinds of foods. Check out the One-Step Wonders below for examples. Portion suggestions are a helpful place to start — keep in mind that portions are unique to each family member and their needs. MyPlate is a reliable resource for planning meals with your favorite foods.
6. Keep it simple. Introduce young people to snacks they can prepare with little or no adult assistance and snacks that require no preparation, like these one-step wonders.



## One-Step Wonders

Try these nutritious snacks for a quick recharge!

1. A cup (your fist size) of fresh, frozen, or canned fruit (canned in water or 100% juice)
2. A small handful of trail mix, nuts, or seeds
3. A big handful of veggies, like edamame, jicama, or mini sweet peppers
4. A hard-boiled egg or premade baked falafel the size of the palm of your hand
5. A cupped handful of air-popped popcorn or pretzels
6. A piece of low-fat string cheese or a yogurt cup (dairy or nondairy)
7. A warm corn tortilla

<sup>1</sup>Nemours. Kids Health. (2021). Cooking with Kids (for Parents). Retrieved from: <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/kids-cook.html>.