

Suggestions for messages to promote Nutrition Month (March) and Traditional Food Day (March 28)

Discover the power of food

- Food plays a vital role in maintaining physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual health. As **traditional food is at the heart of Nunavimmiut life**, celebrate Traditional Food Day on March 28.
- This year's campaign focusses on discovering the power of food to prevent health problems and fuel, heal and bring us together. Food has the power to improve our well-being and health. Making natural or minimally processed food the basis of our diet is an important step toward better health.

Let's make natural or minimally processed food the basis of our diet



- Food from the land is real food, unprocessed and free from industrial additives. When eating store-bought food, it is always best to choose **less-processed food** in order to avoid eating too much salt, fat and sugar. Processed foods are **foods that have been modified from their natural state for either convenience, taste or conservation**. When eating or cooking, prefer natural food such as country food or fresh vegetables, fruit and meat. Slightly processed foods are also a good option, such as milk, yogurt, bread and frozen and canned vegetables and fruit. One advantage of cooking food from scratch at home is that you know exactly what is going into the finished dish.
- Here are some helpful **tips for choosing less-processed food**:

- o Choose country food when available.
- o At the store, shop around the outer aisles of the store: that is where most of the fresh foods are.
- o Avoid foods that contain more than five ingredients.
- o Avoid foods that contain ingredients you cannot pronounce.
- o Avoid artificial ingredients (e.g., artificial colour, artificial flavour).
- o Avoid foods that show characters on the packaging.





Let children discover the pleasure of helping prepare meals.

Children are much more likely to eat what they make, so cooking at home is a great tip if you have picky eaters and is a great way to introduce children to new foods including country food. It's always fun for them to eat their creation!

Here are some ideas of what your children can do depending on their age:

- **2-3-year-olds** can help find ingredients in the fridge or cupboard, wash vegetables and fruit, add items to dishes or put paper cups into muffin tins.
- **3-4-year-olds** can mash potatoes or bananas, pour ingredients from a small pitcher or measuring cups, stir ingredients together or remove eggshells from hard-boiled eggs.
- **4-6-year-olds** can measure dry and liquid ingredients, stir ingredients together, slice soft ingredients with a plastic knife, crack and beat eggs or set the table.
- **6-8-year-olds** can follow simple steps for recipes, use simple kitchen equipment by themselves (grater, toaster, can opener, etc.) or write up a grocery list.
- **8-11-year-olds** can prepare simple recipes such as bannock and suvvalik and can use the stove, the microwave and a knife or ulu with supervision.
- **Teens** can follow more complicated recipes or assemble and mix most ingredients. They can also be in charge of making one meal per week.

Here are five tips for getting children involved in cooking:

1. **Pick a recipe together:** It is motivating for children to be part of the plan from the beginning, and it helps if they prepare something that they love to eat. Shop for groceries together too!
2. **Incorporate learning:** Cooking together can be a good opportunity for children to practise skills such as measuring, counting, reading a recipe or developing motor skills.
3. **Keep it fun!** Imaginative play helps children get deeply involved.
4. **Be a role model:** If you're excited, they will be too. Try a new food and describe the flavour to inspire your eaters to do the same. Get other members of the family involved.
5. **Be cool about the mess:** Spills and accidental messes happen. Keep kitchen towels handy for cleaning up spills.

Eat together as a family as often as possible. Make mealtime pleasant by taking time to connect with your children. Remove any distractions such as the TV, toys or Internet so that everyone can focus on the food and being together.

