



TEEN CHEF

April 2026

NEWSLETTER

LET'S GET COOKIN'!

Cooking basics: measuring solids and liquids. Accurately measuring ingredients, especially for baking, is vital to make sure your final product is picture perfect- and of course tasty! Check out our MCPHD "Simple Saucy Bars" recipe below for an example of how to accurately measure ingredients for baking.



PLAY

Measuring Tips:

- When a recipe instructs you to measure "wet" and "dry" ingredients separately, do exactly that. Ignoring this step can affect your final product!
- Wet ingredients include: eggs, vanilla, apple sauce, brown sugar (surprising, right?) milk and other liquids.
- Dry ingredients include flour, salt, baking powder, baking soda, spices, etc.
- Measure liquid ingredients with liquid measuring cups, and solid ingredients with dry measuring cups.
- Pay close attention to the measurement needed. For example: if your recipe calls for ½ tsp (teaspoon) of salt and you use ½ tbsp (tablespoon) of salt, that will make a huge difference in how your final product tastes, so take your time and pay close attention! Sometimes recipes use "t." to represent teaspoon and "T." to represent tablespoon.

NUTRITION TIDBITS

Last month, we learned about the "Power of Nutrition" and the relationship between the food we eat and the energy we gain from it. However, food isn't the only piece of the puzzle when it comes to eating for energy; Hydration, movement, and getting enough sleep are also just as important.

Hydrate, Hydrate, Hydrate

Water aids digestion and helps transmit nutrients from food to your body. Dehydration can make you

feel sluggish, tired, moody, and can cause thought and memory issues. So, water does not give you energy - but dehydration will make you tired.

Choose mostly water to hydrate your body. Choose water for daily hydration. Many electrolyte drinks contain too much sugar, which can drain your energy. Plus, these drinks are designed for athletes, not for everyday use.

Getting Enough Sleep

Sleep affects everything: your appetite, your mood, your mental health, your immune system, your blood pressure, and your heart function; Aim for at least 7 hours of sleep each night to wake up feeling ready to take on your day.

Get Movin'!

When we move, we use energy- yes, this may sound counterintuitive. Yet movement helps our heart circulate blood and oxygen. Also, inside our cells we have mitochondria which convert energy that we eat from food and turns it into chemical energy that our body can use (ATP) - premium gas! Long term- exercise increases the number of mitochondria that you have in your cells, and helps those mitochondria be more efficient, more mitochondria = more energy.



FEATURED RECIPE OF THE MONTH PUMPKIN WAFFLES!

These waffles come together quickly and easily! The pumpkin, cinnamon, and nutmeg in this recipe give a subtle, heartier flavor compared to regular waffles. Additionally, the whole wheat flour and pumpkin puree both add an extra fiber boost!

PARENTS' PRESS

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans has released new nutrition guidance for 2025-2030. In the following months we'll be breaking down how these changes will affect what is offered in your teens' school cafeteria. This month we'll be focusing on changes to dietary fat restrictions. The past few years, USDA regulations have required schools to ensure meals and snacks offered provide less than 10% of total calories from saturated fat.

New guidelines allow for full-fat dairy products, such as whole milk, to be served as a milk option. Previous school lunch regulations allowed only low-fat and non-fat milk to be served in schools. However, recent federal legislation has allowed milkfat to be exempt from saturated fat limits set for school lunch programs. Meaning schools won't have to consider extra fat from whole milk when staying within these limits.

Saturated fat is a type of dietary fat, typically solid at room temperature. It's found in mostly animal sources such as red meat, high-fat and full-fat dairy foods and poultry skin. It is also found in some plant sources such as coconut oil, palm oil and processed versions of plant foods. Fried food also contains saturated fat. High intake of saturated fats can raise LDL cholesterol levels and may increase risk of heart disease. Practicing mindful food choices is a great practice to instill in your teens to set them up for success as they prepare for adulthood. Encourage them to consider taking smaller portions of foods that are naturally high in saturated fat and choosing more fruits and vegetables as snacks and entrée sides.

If your child is vegetarian, vegan or has seafood, shellfish or egg allergies, be sure to contact your school to inquire about how this change will affect ingredients of meals provided in the future.



***Important note: Although there are various supported changes released in the New Dietary Guidelines, Nutrition Services understands that making nutrition decisions for yourself and loved ones involves consideration of various life circumstances and health conditions, which can make it challenging to practice nutrition recommendations published for the general public. Therefore, some recommendations may not be suitable for you and your family. If you have nutrition questions or concerns regarding these guidelines, or are interested in meeting with a Dietitian, feel free to contact us by calling 317-221-7024.**

Sources:

<https://cdn.realfood.gov/DGA.pdf>

<https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/2026/01/09/dietary-guidelines-for-americans-2025-2030/>

<https://www.npr.org/2026/02/05/nx-s1-5691598/school-lunch-food-pyramid-usda-dietary-guidelines>

Marion County Public Health Department
NUTRITION SERVICES





PUMPKIN WAFFLES

RECIPE MAKES 7 SERVINGS

SERVING SIZE = 1 waffle

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Calories: 215

Total Fat: 8 g

Saturated Fat: 4 g

Cholesterol: 70 mg

Sodium: 356 mg

Total Carbohydrate: 31 g

Fiber: 4 g

Sugars: 11 g

Protein: 7 g

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PUMPKIN WAFFLES

These waffles come together quickly and easily! The pumpkin, cinnamon, and nutmeg in this recipe give a subtle, heartier flavor compared to regular waffles. Additionally, the whole wheat flour adds an extra fiber boost! Enjoy these as a treat with syrup & butter, or as part of a complete breakfast when topped with things like yogurt, fruit, or peanut butter.

INGREDIENTS

3 Tbsp butter, melted or softened

2 eggs

¼ cup brown sugar

⅔ cup buttermilk

⅔ cup low-fat milk

½ cup pumpkin puree

1 ½ cups whole wheat flour

1 ¼ tsp baking powder

½ tsp baking soda

¼ tsp salt

1 tsp cinnamon

½ tsp nutmeg

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large bowl, combine melted/softened butter, eggs, and brown sugar. Whisk together. Add buttermilk, low-fat milk, and pumpkin puree and whisk together until mixed.
2. In a separate bowl, add whole wheat flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Mix together.
3. Slowly add dry ingredients into bowl with wet ingredients, mixing until all ingredients are incorporated into a batter.
4. Turn on waffle maker with dial set to "high." Wait until the indicator light shows "ready."
5. Pour or spoon about ⅓ to ½ cup of batter into the middle of the waffle iron. Spread if necessary, leaving about 1 inch of space from the edge.
6. Close waffle iron and leave for 3 minutes. You will see steam escaping from the waffle iron as it cooks. After 3 minutes, open waffle iron and lift waffle out with fork.
7. Top with fruit, yogurt, or peanut butter and serve immediately, or freeze for later.

If you would like to speak to a dietitian or are interested in nutrition programming call: 317-221-7512 or 317-221-7403