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Get Sharing Good Food

Food for Life Get Togethers uses good food to bring people of different ages and backgrounds together through growing, cooking and eating. Rooted in partnerships with groups of schools, nurseries and community organisations, Food for Life Get Togethers is a project that anyone can take part in.



@SAFoodforLife #FFLGetTogethers
www.fflgettogethers.org



Inspired to Get Sharing?

If you are interested in facilitating good food sharing sessions and practical food activities, you will need guidance on key healthy eating messages for diverse community groups. You may also want some guidance on the benefits of choosing nutritious foods and meal and snack planning, including information on allergies, as well as organising a shared meal occasion. We are here to support you with these things, through our online training offers, downloadable information sheets, case studies and film snippets. Outlined here is just a snapshot of our guidance and tips.

What do we mean by good food?

- Planning and eating regular, nutritionally balanced meals and snacks with others.
- Meals and snacks that comprise of a good variety of foods from the 4 main food groups: lots of vegetables and fruit; starchy wholegrain cereals and potatoes; protein foods including non-meat sources such as pulses (peas, lentils, beans), some fish and some good-quality meat; and some dairy or alternatives.
- Food that's good for the environment: in season; sustainably produced; low-climate impact; and the highest animal welfare standards.
- Food that's good for the economy: grown by local producers; prepared by skilled and knowledgeable people paid a fair wage; and supporting a thriving economy.

Note ... sharing good nutritious food that meets specific requirements of recipients depends on their cultural background, age and health.

What are the benefits of sharing good food?

Sharing and eating healthy, nutritionally balanced food together is something we can all benefit from. Not only can it bring people together to experience the values of shared meal experiences, but it can promote eating well for diverse population groups. Whatever our age and background, we all have something to contribute to a shared meal experience, such as: the meal experiences we enjoy; why we make the food choices we do; sharing past experiences through food memories and reminiscence; how we share food with family and friends; learning about foods enjoyed by ethnically diverse communities and different regions of the UK; learning the benefits to our health by sharing good food together. There are health and wellbeing benefits for a wide range of community groups as well as the environment.

Top Tips

- Consider intergenerational and cultural diversity alongside costs, access to good food and health when sharing food.
- Emphasise how the time and attention devoted to eating, the environment where it occurs, and the sharing of meals can have lots of benefits. This can include improving digestion and choice of foods, more efficient control of what and how much food is consumed, enhanced time with family/friends and social life, and more pleasure in eating.
- Choose simple recipes to work on together that help engage with young and old alike. Encourage activities and conversation around food and mealtimes to unlock potential benefits.



Facilitating good food sessions

There is lots to think about when planning and organising sessions that focus on sharing food and eating together. You might like to consider the following:

- **Purpose of activity** – what are you trying to achieve through the proposed session? For example, it might be a therapeutic food activity to engage a group of older people living with dementia in preparing and sharing a simple nutritious snack, or an intergenerational session that brings together family groups to learn more about good food and nutrition.
- **Practical considerations**
 - Where are you going to hold the good food session?
 - Is it accessible for people with additional needs and is it a safe and effective environment?
 - How do you source/fund the ingredients and materials?
 - What equipment do you need?
 - When is the best time to put on activities?
 - How long will a session be?
- **Good food and nutrition messages** – what information do you want to pass on through the activities? Some things to convey might be how to plan nutritionally balanced meals, allergy information, tips on fussy eating and guidance on a range of special diets. Use the ingredients, recipes, packaging, garden produce and people's experiences to help introduce conversations about nutrition, health and well-being.
- **Getting to know people** – could you start each session with a quick, fun foodie activity to bond the group?
- **Health and safety** – what's the best practice guidance for running food handling and sharing activities? Refer to Government Covid-19 advice and food safety guidance
www.gov.uk/coronavirus
www.food.gov.uk/food-safety
- **Preparing the room for sharing and learning** – can the room be arranged in café-style seating at tables with access to a kitchen for food storage, preparation and washing facilities? This will support great food sharing, e.g. sitting at a table, eating with appropriate cutlery, and show best practice.
- **Supporting resources** – are there any resources that will help explain about good food and engage people in the activity? Consider collecting food related equipment from the past such as butter curlers/dish/knife/ doilies/ old plates/ teapot and tea cosy for reminiscence activities and to stimulate conversation.

Find out what's available in the community garden to sample together and help introduce discussion about the advantages of local, seasonal food.

Bring in less healthy examples of packaged, ultra-processed food labels to emphasise contrast with your good food practical examples.
- **Eating together** – can you create opportunities to discuss the benefits of good food in our daily lives? Take every opportunity to promote good habits.

COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

Although there can be significant benefits from connecting through good food it is important to consider any current local restrictions linked to the coronavirus. Many activities may still be possible with additional safety measures such as distancing and masks or adaptations such as using video technology or being outdoors. As with all safety considerations when organising activities and events, it is vital to assess and manage the risk appropriately for whoever is attending.



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- Choose simple recipes to work on together that help engage with young and old alike. Encourage activities and conversation around food and mealtimes to unlock potential benefits.

The key to Sharing Good Food success is increasing the knowledge, skills and confidence to bring community groups together and plan, prepare and share simple good food. Food that meets the needs of varying population groups, considering generational differences, ethnic diversity, and special dietary needs will require planning, preparation, organisation and allowing for a good deal of flexibility!
