

Some foods change during cooking



Many of the foods we eat are dried and must be cooked with liquid before we eat them.

Some of these are rice, noodles and dry beans and peas. Dry beans come in many shapes and colors. Beans are a source of low fat protein and fiber. They are low in fat and good for your digestion. Beans are available in three forms: dry, canned and frozen. The least expensive form is dry. If cooking dry beans isn't part of your routine, try an experiment with your favorite variety using the following tips. First, let children examine a small amount of dry beans. Help them talk about how they smell, feel and taste. Make sure the beans are not swallowed. Set these beans aside to compare to the cooked beans.

Soaking Dry Beans

Before cooking, soak dry beans in water. Beans get much larger, so use a large pot. For each pound, use 10 cups of water. You can soak them for eight hours, covered and in a cool place. Or, you can soak them in hot water, then bring to a boil on the stove for 3 minutes, and soak covered for one to four hours.

Cooking Dry Beans

Drain soaking water and rinse beans; cook in fresh water. In general, beans take 30 minutes to 2 hours to cook depending on variety. Check the package for specific cooking times and instructions.

Add spices to beans while they cook. Seasonings such as garlic, onion, oregano, parsley or thyme can be added to the pot while beans are cooking. Add other ingredients like tomatoes, vinegar or lemon, only at end of cooking, when beans are tender.



Rice n beans

- tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 (15 ounce) can black beans (or other bean), drained
- 1 (14.5 ounce) can stewed tomatoes
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 1/2 cups uncooked instant brown rice



Adult preparation:

Get the onions chopped, garlic minced and cans opened before children are ready. Always be safe and careful while cooking. Children should be encouraged to help according to their developmental age.

Directions:

In large saucepan, heat oil over medium-high. Add onion and garlic, cook and stir until tender. Add beans, tomatoes and oregano. Bring to a boil; stir in rice. Cover; reduce heat and simmer 5 minutes. Remove from heat; let stand 5 minutes before serving.

* see related activity



Add salt only after beans are tender. If added too early, salt keeps the beans from becoming tender.

To test for doneness, taste a few beans. They should be tender, but not overcooked. When cooling, keep beans in liquid to prevent them from drying out.

Now compare the saved dry beans to a spoonful of cooked beans. How are they different in smell, in color, in size and shape?

Question of the month:

What are three important things that everybody must do if they are coughing, sneezing or feeling sick?
Answer elsewhere in this issue.

This month's activity: Pictures for a Giant!

This is a fun activity the whole family can enjoy on a snow-covered day.








First, have each person draw a simple picture to trace in the snow. Don't go into too much detail: stick figures, simple animal outlines or smiley face. An older child may write their name.

Next, bundle everyone up (see article below) and find an open area of snow in a field, park or open area near you. Don't forget to bring your drawings!

Have each family member pick an area to make a big copy of their drawing in the snow. They should go over it at least twice until the outline is clear. The youngest may need help. A detail, like the eye of a face, may make you jump! Then, switch and trace each other's drawings.

Dressing for Winter - Safely!







Winter is a wonderful time for children and families to do many healthy, outdoor activities together.

-  Dress in layers.
-  Wear dry gloves and boots with nonskid bottoms.
-  Wear a hat or hood that lets you see from side to side and hear all sounds.
-  Wear bright clothing or attach reflective material to clothes so you can be seen easily.
-  Walking, jumping and running will help you keep warm.
-  Walk on sidewalks even when covered with snow.
-  A warm drink when you come inside will make you feel toasty!



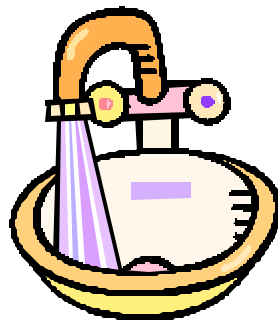
Two rules for cold and flu season: Wash Your Hands & Stay Home When Sick!!

How to properly wash hands:

-  Use warm running water.
-  Lather hands with soap.
-  Rub hands together for at least 10 seconds. Rub backs of hands, between fingers and under nails.
-  Rinse with warm water.
-  Dry hands with paper towels.
-  Turn off water with paper towel.



Answer of the month: It's important to cover your cough and sneeze with a tissue, clean your hands with soap and water or hand cleaner when water isn't available, and most of all to STAY AT HOME when you are sick.



We want to hear from you!

Dear Parents and Childcare Providers: Let us know how you encourage a healthy lifestyle in your home or daycare. We want to share your ideas with the rest of Bergen County in future issues.

Contact Kathy Andrusz, Healthy Lifestyles Gazette Editor, Bergen County Department of Health Services, at 201-634-2694 or email: kandrusz@co.bergen.nj.us

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