



# INFORMATION FOR EDUCATORS

During their teen years, young people learn many life skills that will prepare them for the years ahead. However, a critical skill that many teens don't acquire is how to cook safely to prevent devastating fires and injuries. As most teens already have some cooking responsibilities at home and within a few short years will be moving out to places of their own, this is the perfect time for them to learn the basics of safe cooking.

Cooking is the number one cause of home fires in Canada, so it is critical that young people be aware of the hazards and how to prevent them. *What's Cooking – for Teens!* focuses on the leading causes of kitchen fires and also includes important information about smoke alarms and home fire escape planning.

## Delivery in the High Schools

This presentation is designed for high school students in grades 9 through 12. The most logical setting is the grade 9 or 10 *Food and Nutrition* course, or grade 12 *Food and Nutrition Sciences* course. Each class is approximately 70-75 minutes long. Many of the classrooms used for these courses have kitchen set-ups, which make them an ideal venue, however the presentation is designed to be equally effective in classrooms without kitchens. Teachers are required by Ontario curriculum to incorporate an element of safety into *Food and Nutrition* courses, which makes this session an ideal "fit". Adapting to different grade levels will require only minor adjustments in delivery.

If you have a professional or personal contact among the staff of the high school, they may be able to facilitate contact with the appropriate people. Otherwise, the best approach is to contact the Family Studies department directly and explain you would like to conduct a session on cooking safety. The best time of year to deliver the presentation is the beginning of the semester.

## Alternate Venues

Although designed for high school classes, *What's Cooking – for Teens!* can easily be adapted to other groups and venues, such as:

- Girl Guides/Scouts;
- 4H clubs;
- Babysitting courses;
- Community youth groups.

## Program Elements

*What's Cooking – for Teens!* consists of a CD containing the following elements:

- Kitchen hazard identification activity;
- PowerPoint presentation with video clips;
- Student knowledge quiz.

Also included on the CD are a slide-by-slide presentation guide, teaching outline, teacher feedback form and information for the educator.

## Planning the Presentation

When scheduling the session with the school, suggest that the best time would be first thing in the morning or after lunch. This will give you an opportunity to set up the session without interrupting another class. Try to arrange a time to visit the classroom and teacher in advance to assess the facilities and determine what resources and props you will need. Consider the following during your visit:

- Does the classroom have a kitchen? If it does, make note of the equipment that is available, e.g. electric kettle, microwave oven, tea towels, oven mitts, wooden spoons, etc. These items can be used to stage the hazard identification activity. Make a list of additional props you will need to bring with you to the session.
- Inquire about available A/V equipment. For example, some classrooms may have speakers that can be hooked up to your computer.
- Talk to the teacher about the students. Find out the number, age range, and if there are any special considerations of which you need to be aware.
- Reconfirm the available time for your session. Although the class may be scheduled for 75 minutes, administrative tasks and school announcements can eat into that time. You may need to be prepared to shorten the presentation.
- If your session is scheduled for the morning, confirm that someone will be there early to let you into the classroom to set up.

## Tips for Teaching Teens

Engaging teens in educational programs can be challenging for even the most seasoned educators. The PowerPoint presentation contains important information, but without the talents of a skilled educator, it will be hard to keep the students' attention. Here are some suggestions to help make the session as effective and impactful as possible:

- Adapt the presentation to your needs. Depending on the audience and circumstances, you may wish to add or remove slides. Familiarize yourself with the slide transitions.
- Attend in uniform. The fire service is highly regarded in most communities, so you will most likely have the respect of the students at the outset.
- Make the session interactive. The presentation guide includes questions to promote discussion and keep the students interested.
- Use props. Demonstrating how to put a lid on a pot, or change a smoke alarm battery, will be much more memorable than explaining it.
- Use examples from your community. Wherever possible, include anecdotes about actual fires or success stories to reinforce a point.

## **Evaluation**

*What's Cooking – for Teens!* includes two simple evaluation instruments: a student knowledge quiz and a teacher feedback form. Based on the results and comments in these evaluation instruments, you will be able to revise and adapt the presentation to increase its impact and effectiveness.

### **Knowledge Quiz**

The knowledge quiz will help to determine whether the students learned and retained the information in the presentation. Pre-tests are not included as part of this program because the pilot sessions indicated that the students already had a high level of knowledge about the subject prior to the session. Therefore, the purpose of the presentation is to reinforce their knowledge and add reason and context to the safety behaviours. By telling the students up front that they will have a brief quiz to complete following the presentation, they are more likely to pay attention.

When scoring the completed knowledge quizzes, make note of questions that are consistently answered incorrectly. You then have the opportunity to revise future presentations slightly to emphasize that particular component and summarize it again at the end.

### **Teacher Feedback Form**

Comments provided on the teacher feedback form will address the process, content and delivery of the session. The feedback of these professional educators is invaluable to ensure your presentations are as effective as they can be. However, you may wish to wait until you have delivered a few different sessions and compared the feedback of the various teachers before making any substantial revisions to the session.