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 **PODCAST INTERVIEW**

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Virtual cooking class improves children's nutrition knowledge

A new article published in the Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior highlights the benefits of a virtual cooking/nutrition program on cooking self-efficacy and nutrition knowledge

Philadelphia, April 7, 2022 – Amid parental concerns regarding poor nutrition and lack of cooking skills among youth in Flint, Michigan, a team of local dietitians, chefs, and researchers created *Flint Families Cook* during the COVID-19 pandemic, a program for families with children ages 8-18 years old, delivered virtually to children and families in their homes.

This addition to the [great educational material](#) (GEM) collection appearing in the [Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior](#), published by Elsevier, reports that *Flint Families Cook* demonstrated success in reaching youth from families with low income and improving cooking self-efficacy, nutrition knowledge, and self-efficacy for consuming fruits and vegetables among young participants.

Flint Families Cook, co-facilitated by a chef and dietitian, encourages families to cook healthy meals together at home, using local ingredients. Through 7.5 hours of live, virtual instruction over five consecutive weeks, children and families learn proper techniques for using knives, measuring, sautéing, roasting, and baking from a chef, while a dietitian focuses on nutrition and health benefits of specific food groups and nutrients.

“One very important part of the class that is happening because of the virtual platform is that families are participating in the classes together as opposed to children participating in the class individually, apart from their family. We started to see parents becoming much more involved in the education and sitting at the table once the meals were prepared for a family dinner,” said Amy Saxe-Custack, PhD, MPH, RD, Department of Pediatrics and Human Development, Division of Public Health, Michigan State University-Hurley Children's Hospital Pediatric Public Health Initiative, Flint, MI, USA.



Caption: *Flint Families Cook*, co-facilitated by a chef and dietitian, encourages families to cook healthy meals together at home. Through 7.5 hours of live, virtual instruction over five consecutive weeks, children and families learn proper techniques for using knives, measuring, sautéing, roasting, and baking from a chef, while a dietitian focuses on nutrition and health benefits of specific food groups and nutrients, alone and in combination (Credit: *Flint Families Cook*).

The family-based, virtual format directly engages families in cooking healthy meals together and expands the program's reach to entire households, as well as extended family and friends. In addition to holding a growing waitlist of eager families, *Flint Families Cook* addresses challenges with preparing and consuming healthy foods at home. Such programming is feasible and attractive to communities with similar concerns about child nutrition.

Notes for editors

The article is “*Flint Families Cook: A Virtual Cooking and Nutrition Program for Families*,” by Amy Saxe-Custack, PhD, MPH, RD, and Sarah Egan, MPH, RD (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jneb.2022.01.002>). It appears in the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, volume 54, issue 4 (April 2022), published by [Elsevier](#).

The article is openly available at [https://www.jneb.org/article/S1499-4046\(22\)00002-1/fulltext](https://www.jneb.org/article/S1499-4046(22)00002-1/fulltext).

Full text of the article is also available to credentialed journalists upon request; contact Eileen Leahy at +1 732 238 3628 or jnebmmedia@elsevier.com to obtain a copy. To schedule an interview with the author(s), please contact Amy Saxe-Custack, PhD, MPH, RD, at saxeamy@msu.edu.

An audio podcast featuring an interview with Amy Saxe-Custack, PhD, MPH, RD, and other information for journalists are available at www.jneb.org/content/media. Excerpts from the podcast may be reproduced by the media with permission from Eileen Leahy.

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The *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* features articles that provide new insights and useful findings related to nutrition education research, practice, and policy. The content areas of JNEB reflect the diverse interests of health, nutrition, education, Cooperative Extension, and other professionals working in areas related to nutrition education and behavior. As the Society's official journal, JNEB also includes occasional policy statements, issue perspectives, and member communications. www.jneb.org

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