



Mayors Wellness Campaign
Put your community in motion.

Physical Health & Nutrition



HEALTHY COOK-OFF

HEATING UP KITCHEN COMPETITION

- **Public health research** shows that people who frequently cook meals at home eat more healthily and consume fewer calories than those who cook less often.
- A friendly competition can show community members of all ages that it is easy to cook nutritious meals on a budget.
- A town cook-off that promotes budget-friendly nutritious cooking and eating empowers community members to create lasting changes in the way they cook and eat at home.

ACTION STEPS

Create the Criteria

- Set rules for the competition and decide what criteria will determine the winner.
- Decide who can participate in the competition. Will it be for municipal employees, or all town residents?
- Consider celebrating ethnic diversity in your cook-offs by having themes or categories that recognize cooking from different cultures.

Recruit Participants

- Spread the word with banners and flyers.
- Promote the competition through emails and social media.

Set the Stage

- Secure a location that suits the kind of cook-off you are having.
- BBQs can be held in a local park, but other types of cook-offs will likely require multiple ovens and stovetops indoors.
- Remember to consider the size of the audience that might attend. Think about how to best utilize the space so that each contestant has enough room to prepare and display their food, and gather an audience.

FOLLOW THEIR LEAD!

On May 15, 2013, Woodbridge Township hosted a Healthy Cook-off at its local Wegmans. Contestants prepared healthy recipes which were judged in four categories: "Healthiest," "Most Creative," "Best Flavor" and "Best Overall." The competition was judged by a panel of special guests including former New York Giants Running Back, Ottis Anderson. To learn more about this event, click [here](#).

Let the Judging Begin

- Decide whether you want to make the cook-off a blind taste test, or let each chef present his or her own dish.
- Recruit local celebrities to judge the competition, like the Mayor, a local Health Officer, or a school principal.
- Offer enticing prizes to increase participation.

Maintain the Momentum

- Consider compiling all participant recipes into a healthy recipe cookbook available for download from your town website, or for distribution at community events.

MORE RESOURCES

Indiana State Employees Healthy Recipe Contest
How to Create a Kids' Healthy Cooking Club