

While enjoying more meals at home strengthens family relationships it is also an important step to eating healthy and achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. A major health issue facing North Carolinians as well as our nation is Chronic Disease caused by Obesity. When asked why we eat out on the go and why we let other people cook so much of our food, the answer is often "I don't have time to cook", or "I can eat out cheaper" or "it's too much trouble to cook for one person". The negative impacts of letting other people cook so much of our food, whether we are dining out, getting take out, or a visit to a drive through is larger food portions, more calories, more fat, and not enough fruits and vegetables.

North Carolina Cooperative Extension's Family and Consumer Science Program is committed to helping citizens gain the skills needed to cook simple, healthy meals for their families through the Virtual Cook Smart, Eat Smart Program. Cook Smart, Eat Smart keeps it simple-with simple healthy preparation techniques, simple ingredients, and simple equipment. Each session contains several basic cooking techniques and other topics related to eating and preparing meals at home. Cook Smart, Eat Smart also provides tips for stretching your food dollar while still eating healthy.

The upcoming eight-part cooking series will be taught by Renay Knapp, Tracy Davis, Julie Sawyer, and Emily Troutman; Family & Consumer Sciences Extension Agents in Henderson, Transylvania, Rutherford, Haywood, and Burke Counties. The free class will meet on Wednesdays, February 3 – March 24 via Zoom. Register online at go.ncsu.edu/virtualcses. For more information contact Julie Sawyer at 828-456-3575 or email: julie_sawyer@ncsu.edu.