

## Managing the Blender Bike at Events and in Classroom Settings

A blender bike offers a fun way to encourage fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity. Consult the Resource Sheet *Preparing to Use the Blender Bike* for important considerations to aid in planning use of the bike.

In addition, consider your goals and the message you want to communicate – what do you want people to take away from the experience? Use this information to guide how you approach use of the blender bike and the associated activities.

### Basic Nutrition and Health Messages

The blender bike can be used to communicate these important points:

1. Encourage fruit and vegetable consumption.
2. The *Dietary Guidelines for American* recommend limiting sugar, sodium, and fat in the diet.
3. Point out the importance of reading labels when purchasing ingredients.
4. When you prepare food at home, you can control the amount of sugar, salt, and fat.

See also the Resource Sheet *Healthy Living Messages*.

### Using the Blender Bike at Large Public Events

Consider the following aspects when you will use the blender bike at a large public event such as a fair.

Where will you be located?

- Will you be outdoors, under a tent, or inside?

What is the anticipated audience? How many smoothies do you think you will make and serve?

- Serve smaller serving size (3-4 oz). Based on a 48 oz. blender container, you can make 12-15 servings per container.
- Consider the cost for purchasing enough ingredients for the anticipated audience.
- Buy one type of frozen fruit to simplify preparation.

How will you ensure food safety?

- Determine the location of a source of water for handwashing and clean up.
- Have a cooler and ice to keep perishable foods cold for the duration of the event.

Will you involve participants in preparing the ingredients or will you demonstrate preparation and have participants blend them?

- Have enough volunteers to staff the bike station and preparation stations.
- Limit or supervise use of knives to avoid injury.
- Supervise pedaling to ensure participant safety and prevent misuse of the bike.



### In a Classroom of Workshop Setting

When you have more time to engage with participants, consider the following:

- Goals and desired outcomes
  - How much hands-on food preparation do you want?
- Group size and the age of participants
  - For maximum engagement, the ideal size of a group making smoothies is 6-8 participants.
  - The total size of the group will influence how much time is needed for each activity or station.
- Amount of time available
  - The activities you select will depend on the amount of time available.
- Setting and facility
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- Availability of staff and/or volunteers to assist
  - Have a minimum of one staff member or volunteer per station.



Divide the group and set up activity stations for participants to rotate through. Here are several possible ways to structure the stations.

#### 1. **Smoothies** (10-15 minutes per station)

Station 1: *Making Smoothies on the Blender Bike* (see Activity Instructions)

Station 2: *Calories In – Calories Out* (see Activity Instructions)

Station 3: (see Activity Instructions)

#### 2. **Smoothies Plus**

Entire group: *Make Your Own Smoothie Recipe* (5-10 minutes).

Each group prepares ingredients according to the recipe they designed (5-10 minutes).

Divide into three groups and take turns:

1. One group uses the bike to blend their smoothie (5-10 minutes)
2. While waiting, remaining two groups can do these activities until the bike is free.
  - i. *Calories In – Calories Out* (5-10 minutes)
  - ii. *The Beat Goes On* (5-10 minutes)
3. When smoothie blending group is done, they rotate to one of the other activities.

#### 3. **Smoothies and Beyond**

The activity instructions describe the set up and utensils needed for these stations.

Station 1: Smoothies (see *Smoothie Recipe Sheet*)

Station 2: Salsa (see *Blender Bike Additional Recipes*)

Station 3: Pumpkin Hummus (see *Blender Bike Additional Recipes*)

Variations:

- Participants prepare ingredients and take turns using the bike to blend. Each group gets to make once recipe, but everyone gets to taste them all.
- Use a regular blender to blend one of the recipes.

## Pedaling the Bike

Participants are often surprised about how much harder it is to pedal a blender bike, especially when beginning to pedal if the recipe contains thicker ingredients (e.g., yogurt, banana, beans) or ice and frozen fruit.

These tips will help you oversee riders on the bike.

- Ensuring Participant Safety: When smaller riders begin pedaling. Supervise those waiting to pedal the bike. Some participants are tempted to touch the tire while it is spinning, which can result in an abrasion.
- Protecting the Equipment: A blender bike is an expensive piece of equipment. Caution the rider to refrain from pedaling too vigorously, as the chain may come off its track. Have riders pedal only when the blender is on the bike, and although tempting, to refrain from pedaling the bike without the blender.
- Participant Age: Make instructions age appropriate. Older participants can read through recipes; younger participants will need verbal instructions.
- Participant Size: Adjust the height of the bike seat based on the rider's size. Ideally, when the rider's foot is on the pedal, their knee should be slightly bent. At first, smaller riders may not have the strength in their leg muscles to get the blender turning.
- Amount of Time on the Bike: Taking turns pedaling (e.g., have each person count to 20).

See *Adjusting the Blender Bike* Resource Sheet to troubleshoot any issues with using the bike.

