2027 DISTRICT 5 4-H FOOD CHALLENGE CONTEST INFORMATION

This contest challenges teams of 4-H members to create a dish using only a key ingredient and access to a "grocery store" of other ingredients. From these ingredients, team members create a healthy dish while practicing proper food safety, food preparation, and communication skills.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Contest Date

Friday, February 12, 2027

Location

Maude Cobb Convention Center
100 Grand Blvd
Longview, Texas 75606

How to Register

- All registrations for the 2026-2027 District contests will be conducted on the TX4H system. It is the responsibility of the 4-H member and their parents to ensure they are registered for Food Challenge on time, correctly, and the payment has been accepted.
- Enter individually on TX4H at https://tx4h.tamu.edu
- Payments declined will need to be cleared and accepted BEFORE the contest date in order for the contestant to be considered registered and eligible to participate.
- Contest Fee - $25 per contestant
- Adult Volunteers – no fee (must register to participate as an approved volunteer)
- No late registrations will be accepted.
- The general refund policy for TX4H is that no refunds are provided to a 4-H member or family once the registration is approved. In extreme circumstances, such as a death in the immediate family, severe illness/accident, or cancellation of an event, refunds will be provided, less any expenses already incurred by the event.

District Deadlines

- Registration is open from **October 2, 2026 – January 21, 2027. We do not have the capabilities to accept LATE registrations.**

Entry Divisions (grade by September 1, 2026)

- Junior Grades 3, 4, and 5
- Intermediate Grades 6, 7, and 8
- Senior Grades 9, 10, 11 and 12

Entry

- Enter as a team of 3 to 4 members.
- Teams are made up of individuals in the same age division (Junior, Intermediate or Senior).
- Teams with fewer than three members will be disqualified.

County Entries

- Each county agent will determine the number of teams qualifying to represent their county. The district does not cap the number of teams.
- New! Each team is required to provide at least one adult volunteer to assist with this event (see information below) Adult participation is based upon the number of teams registered.
- Teams may not include members in different age divisions.

Contest Viewing

- The Food Challenge contest will be closed to viewing. See volunteer assistance section to sign up to assist with the contest.
- Parents/project leaders may assist their youth members into the convention center building with supplies.
    - Teams must check-in and check-out of the contest area as a group.
    - ONLY THE TEAM and committee members are allowed in the convention center building as we are using all rooms for the contest. All others must remain outside the building.

New! Food and Refreshments

- Food trucks will be available in the parking lot for those desiring to purchase coffee, drinks, snacks and meals throughout the day.

New! Volunteer Assistance per Team

- When registering, each team will identify at least one adult that will assist with a portion of the contest. A Food Challenge volunteer orientation will be provided by February 4. This training will be conducted virtually and recorded.
- Adults desiring to assist with this contest as room or grocery store monitors, group leaders, runners and/or timekeepers are greatly appreciated as this contest continues to grow. By functioning as a volunteer, you will have the opportunity to view parts of the contest in action. Register via TX4H between **October 2 – January 21, 2027.**

- Only adults that are assisting with the contest will be permitted inside the building. The foyer area is closed.
- New! Adults may NOT assist teams during the contest. Volunteers found providing assistance (verbal or non-verbal) will be asked to leave the building and their teams may be disqualified from the contest.
- Below is the table for determining the number of approved adult volunteers that will be required to register via TX4H (no charge) and assist with the Food Challenge contest:

Number of Teams	Number of Adult Volunteers
1 - 3	1
4 – 6	2
7 – 9	3
10 – 12	4
13 – 15	5
16 or more	6

Special Accommodations

- Any competitor who requires auxiliary aids or medically documented accommodations must contact Carolyn Walton at 903-834-6191 at the District office at least 2 weeks before the competition or note such needs when registering on TX4H.

Attire

- Each team will have the option of wearing coordinated clothing and/or aprons.
- ALL team members must wear closed-toe shoes and hair restraints (cap, hair net, chef hat bandana, etc.).

Electronic Devices

- No electronic devices or jewelry (except for medically required) is allowed in contest areas. This includes cell phones, smart watches, or other communication devices.

Participant Check-in

- All youth participants will need to check-in AS A TEAM at the roll-up door at the side of the convention center (see 4-H signage) at least 20 minutes before scheduled heat.
- Be sure to bring a donation to support the D5 Council Officer Community Service Project!

Schedule of Events

- A detailed schedule will be released in early February. Check-in, preparation, and judging times for each age division will occur on a staggered schedule throughout the competition with an awards ceremony to follow.

Awards and Prizes

- An awards ceremony will be conducted at the end of the contest period. Youth participating in the Food Challenge are encouraged to stay for the awards ceremony. Youth placing, but unable to participate in the ceremony, will receive their award and prize from their county agent.
- All team placings will be announced with 1st place teams receiving a team banner to display at their county Extension office. Places 2nd – 3rd will be presented a 4-H rosette.
- The senior team (each member) that wins the Cook-off will receive a People's Choice banner and their county Extension office will receive a $100 gift card to purchase 4-H items for their project.
- Placings for the Food Challenge will also be published via email and the District 5 4-H website one week after this event.
- Entry via TX4H gives permission to the District office to use the participant's name and/or photograph as needed for marketing and promotion purposes.

Scorecards

- Junior and Intermediate teams will be ranked, based upon skills demonstrated during preparation and presentation of dish to judges.
- Senior teams will be scored and ranked based upon scoring criteria listed on the state 4-H Food Challenge scorecard (note: scorecards have been updated for this year – see attached).
- Rankings will be posted electronically by the end of the contest day.
- Senior age division scorecards will be forwarded to the contestant's county Extension office. Please allow up to two weeks for processing.

Resource Materials Provided

- Each team will be provided the following resources at contest:
  - ✓ Fight BAC
  - ✓ Know Your Nutrients
  - ✓ Food and Kitchen Safety Fact Sheet
  - ✓ Dietary Guidelines for Americans
  - ✓ The Science and Function of Ingredients and Cooking
  - ✓ Food Challenge worksheet
- No other resource materials will be permitted.
- Teams may not use their personal copies of resources during the contest.
- See state guidelines for additional information https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/TexasFoodChallengeRules2027_FINAL.pdf

Questions Before Contest

- Contact your local county Extension agent for eligibility, participation, and county-level contest questions.
- Contact Carolyn Walton at the District 5 office at 903-834-6191 for registration questions.

Questions at Contest

- Please see a help desk attendant located in the foyer.
- Please provide feedback on the Food Challenge by completing a short QR code survey located at the Help Desk.

JUNIOR AGE DIVISION (grades 3rd-5th)

Junior Age Division Contest Rules of Play

- Each team will be directed to a preparation station. Contest categories will be revealed at the preparation station.
- Each team will receive an information sheet with their contest category and "key" ingredient for that category. The "key" ingredient will be representative of one of the following categories: Appetizer, Main Dish, Side Dish, Healthy Dessert.
- New! Junior teams will not use heat to prepare a dish.
- Teams will have access to a "grocery store" of additional ingredients which can be "purchased" and combined with the team's "key" ingredient to create an original recipe/dish during the contest. The "grocery store" will include items commonly found in grocery stores such as produce, canned goods, crackers, dairy products, etc.
- Teams must "purchase" at least two additional items from the "grocery store". Teams will also receive pricing information for "grocery store" items at their station. "Grocery store" items will be "purchased" using a pricing system and "contest currency." The currency system will be explained prior to the contest. Teams may not exceed the provided "contest currency" or trade "currency" or share grocery store items with other teams. Teams will be provided a set dollar amount to "spend" at the store. Each item in the store will be priced.
- Each team will have 40 minutes to prepare the dish, plan a presentation, and clean up the preparation area.

Junior Pantry Supplies

- Each team may include in their supply box the following "pantry" ingredients which they may use when preparing their dish.
- There is no requirement to use these items, nor is it mandatory that teams include these in their supply box.

Pepper Salt	3 (up to 16 oz) cans/packets vegetables, fruit, and/or meat (meat must be precooked and ready to eat, i.e., canned/packet of tuna or chicken)
Oil (up to 17 oz)	Small box of INSTANT pudding

1 can (up to 16 oz) beef or chicken broth	1 commercially package precooked rice or pasta
	Small bottle of sweetener (i.e., honey, agave syrup, maple syrup)

Junior Supply Box

- Each team will bring an equipment box containing only ONE of each of the following items, unless a different quantity is noted:

Bench scraper	Manual pencil sharpener
Beverage glass	Measuring spoons (1 set)
Bowls (up to 4 – any size)	Non-stick cooking spray
Can opener	Note cards (1 package – no larger 5x7)
Colander	Paper towels (1 roll)
Cookie cutters (up to 2)	Pencils (no limit)
Cutting boards (4)	Plastic box & trash bag for dirty equipment
Disposable tasting spoons (no limit)	Potato masher
Dry measuring cups (1 set)	Potato peeler
First aid kit	Rolling pin
Empty tub for dirty dishes	Sanitizing wipes (1 container) or bleach solution spray
Fork	Serving dishes/utensils:1 plate/platter, 1 bowl and1 utensil
Gloves	Skewers (1 set)
Grater	Spatulas (2)
Hand sanitizer	Stirring spoon
Kitchen shears (1 pair)	Storage bags (1 box)
Kitchen timer	Tongs (2)
Knives (up to 6)	Toothpicks (no limit)
Liquid measuring cup (2 cup size)	Whisk

Junior Preparation

- Teams will not use heat to prepare their dish. The addition of precooked pantry items will allow for creativity in planning a dish.
- Each team will create an entire dish/recipe (not a full meal) using the key ingredients provided and grocery store items.
- Teams must select and use at least two items and will be provided the maximum number of items they can select.
- Dishes/recipes created should include two or more servings.
- Teams should present the entire dish/recipe to the judges and communicate during their presentation what an individual serving size should be. Teams will be responsible for determining the number of servings their dish provides.
- Teams should not create side or multiple dishes with their ingredients/grocery store items.

- Teams are challenged to be creative and develop an original recipe with the ingredients provided.
- Teams will determine the exact amount of each ingredient used based on the original recipe.
- The key ingredient and/or grocery store ingredients selected should be used to garnish the dish.
- Note cards may be used to write down the recipe the team creates, along with notes related to nutrition and food safety. Teams should be exact on ingredients, preparation steps, cooking time, temperature, etc.
- A safe and sanitary working environment must be maintained during the contest. Each station will have food and kitchen safety resources. Teams should follow steps listed to ensure proper food and equipment safety is followed. Judges will be scoring teams on food and equipment safety during the preparation phase of the contest. Teams should also discuss safety steps used during the presentation phase of the contest.
- Gloves do not have to be worn throughout the contest; however, there should always be a barrier between your hands and any food touched. A barrier includes gloves and/or cooking utensils. When wearing gloves, they must be changed between handling raw meats/seafood; handling cooked items; and ready to eat items or raw vegetables to prevent cross contamination.
- Each team member must wear a hat, hair net and/or other type of hair restraint during the food preparation part of the competition. Examples of acceptable hair restraints include hairnets, bandana with hair completely pulled back, Chef hat with hair restrained inside, or cap with hair completely tucked inside.
- Each station will have a variety of nutrition resources/references. Each team should highlight key nutrients in their dish and their functions during their presentation.
- Teams will not be required to analyze the cost of the recipe, nor will this be included in the presentation or scoring of the contest.
- Teams must clean up their preparation areas. Clean-up time is included in the 40-minute preparation allotment.

Junior Presentation

- Following the preparation phase of the contest, each team will give a 3-minute presentation to a panel of judges. ALL team members should participate in the presentation (see suggested talking points at the end of this document).
- To earn maximum points, teams must use the 3-minute presentation to address the following areas of presentation according to scorecard: Dietary Guidelines, Nutrition Knowledge, Food Preparation, Safety Concerns, and Serving Size.
-

At the end of 3 minutes, time will be called – additional time will not be allowed. Judges will not ask any questions.
- Finished dishes MAY NOT leave the judging area. Dishes must be discarded after teams complete the judging process to ensure teams in the following heats do not see what ingredients are available to gain an advantage.

Junior Scoring

- Junior teams will be ranked based upon their preparation and presentation using the attached scorecard as a basis for placing. Teams' placings will be announced at the award ceremony. You may check Judgingcard.com for a complete list of rankings after the contest.

INTERMEDIATE AGE DIVISION (grades 6th-8th)

Intermediate Age Division Contest Rules of Play

- Each team will be directed to a preparation station. Contest categories will be revealed at the preparation station.
- Teams will be randomly selected with access to electricity and/or a heat source.
- Each team will receive an information sheet with their contest category and "key" ingredient for that category. The "key" ingredient will be representative of one of the following categories: Appetizer, Main Dish, Side Dish, Healthy Dessert.
- Teams will have access to a "grocery store" of additional ingredients which can be "purchased" and combined with the team's "key" ingredient to create an original recipe/dish during the contest. The "grocery store" will include items commonly found in grocery stores such as produce, canned goods, crackers, dairy products, etc.
- Teams must "purchase" at least two additional items from the "grocery store". Teams will also receive pricing information for "grocery store" items at their station. "Grocery store" items will be "purchased" using a pricing system and "contest currency." The currency system will be explained prior to the contest. Teams may not exceed the provided "contest currency" or trade "currency" or share grocery store items with other teams. Teams will be provided a set dollar amount to "spend" at the store. Each item in the store will be priced.
- Each team will have 40 minutes to prepare the dish, plan a presentation, and clean up the preparation area.
- Teams should be prepared to only plug in one piece of equipment at a time to reduce the risk of electrical malfunction.

Intermediate Pantry Supplies

- Each team may include in their supply box the following "pantry" ingredients which they may use when preparing their dish.
- There is no requirement to use these items, nor is it mandatory that teams include these in their supply box.

Salt	3 (up to 16 oz) cans/packets vegetables, fruit, and/or meat (meat must be precooked and ready to eat, i.e., canned/packet of tuna or chicken)
Pepper	Small box of INSTANT pudding
Oil (up to 17 oz)	1 commercially package precooked rice or pasta
1 medium onion	Small bottle of sweetener (i.e., honey, agave syrup, maple syrup)

1 jar bouillon OR1 can (up to 16 oz) beef or chicken broth	1 pound of cornstarch or flour

Intermediate Supply Box

- Each team will bring an equipment box containing only ONE of each of the following items, unless a different quantity is noted:

Bench scraper	Manual pencil sharpener
Beverage glass	Measuring spoons (1 set)
Bowls (up to 4 – any size)	Meat tenderizer
Calculator	Non-stick cooking spray
Can opener	Note cards (1 package – no larger 5x7)
Colander	Paper towels (1 roll)
Cookie cutters (up to 2)	Pancake turner (up to 2)
Cutting boards (4)	Pencils (no limit)
Disposable tasting spoons (no limit)	Plastic box & trash bag for dirty equipment
Dry measuring cups (1 set)	Pot with lid
Electric skillet	Potato masher
First aid kit	Potato peeler
Food thermometer	Rolling pin
Extension cord (Multiple outlet or strip style)	Sanitizing wipes (1 container) or bleach solution spray
Empty tub for dirty dishes	Serving dishes/utensils:1 plate/platter, 1 bowl and1 utensil
Fork	Skewers (6 maximum)
Gloves	Skillet with lid
Grater	Spatulas (2)
Hand sanitizer	Stirring spoon
Hot pads (up to 5)	Storage bags (1 box)
Kitchen shears (1 pair)	Tongs (2)
Kitchen timer	Toothpicks (no limit)
Knives (up to 6)	Two single-burner or one double-burner hot plate (electric only)
Liquid measuring cup (up to 2)	Whisk

Intermediate Preparation

- Teams will be randomly selected as to access to electricity and/or a heat source.
- Each team will create an entire dish/recipe (not a full meal) using the key ingredients provided and grocery store items.
- Teams must select and use at least two items and will be provided the maximum number of items they can select.
- Dishes/recipes created should include two or more servings.
- Teams should present the entire dish/recipe to the judges and communicate during their presentation what an individual serving size should be. Teams will be responsible for determining the number of servings their dish provides.

- Teams should not create side or multiple dishes with their ingredients/grocery store items.
- Teams are challenged to be creative and develop an original recipe with the ingredients provided.
- Teams will determine the exact amount of each ingredient used based on the original recipe.
- The key ingredient and/or grocery store ingredients selected should be used to garnish the dish.
- Note cards may be used to write down the recipe the team creates, along with notes related to nutrition and food safety. Teams should be exact on ingredients, preparation steps, cooking time, temperature, etc.
- A safe and sanitary working environment must be maintained during the contest. Each station will have food and kitchen safety resources. Teams should follow steps listed to ensure proper food and equipment safety is followed. Judges will be scoring teams on food and equipment safety during the preparation phase of the contest. Teams should also discuss safety steps used during the presentation phase of the contest.
- Gloves do not have to be worn throughout the contest; however, there should always be a barrier between your hands and any food touched. A barrier includes gloves and/or cooking utensils. When wearing gloves, they must be changed between handling raw meats/seafood; handling cooked items; and ready to eat items or raw vegetables to prevent cross contamination.
- Each team member must wear a hat, hair net and/or other type of hair restraint during the food preparation part of the competition. Examples of acceptable hair restraints include hairnets, bandana with hair completely pulled back, chef hat with hair restrained inside, or cap with hair completely tucked inside.
- Each station will have a variety of nutrition resources/references. Each team should highlight key nutrients in their dish and their functions during their presentation.
- Teams will not be required to analyze the cost of the recipe, nor will this be included in the presentation or scoring of the contest.
- Teams must clean up their preparation areas. Clean-up time is included in the 40-minute preparation allotment.

Intermediate Presentation

- Following the preparation phase of the contest, each team will give a 3-minute presentation to a panel of judges. ALL team members should participate in the presentation (see suggested talking points at the end of this document).
-

To earn maximum points, teams must use the 3-minute presentation to address the following areas of presentation according to scorecard: Dietary Guidelines, Nutrition Knowledge, Food Preparation, Safety Concerns, and Serving Size.
-

At the end of 3 minutes, time will be called – additional time will not be allowed. Judges will not ask any questions.
- Finished dishes MAY NOT leave the judging area. Dishes must be discarded after teams complete the judging process to ensure teams in the following heats do not see what ingredients are available to gain an advantage.

Intermediate Scoring

- Intermediate teams will be ranked based upon their preparation and presentation using the attached scorecard as a basis for placing. Team placings will be announced at the award ceremony. You may check Judgingcard.com for a complete list of rankings after the contest.

SENIOR AGE DIVISION (grades 9th-12th)

Senior Age Division Contest Rules of Play

- Senior Age Division Rounds
  - Round 1 will be comprised of all teams registered for this contest.
  - Round 2 will be a Senior Cook-off of 1st place teams in each food category.
- Each team will be directed to a preparation station. Contest categories will be revealed at the preparation station.
- All Senior teams will be permitted to use heat to prepare a dish.
- Each team will receive an information sheet with their contest category and "key" ingredient for that category. The "key" ingredient will be representative of one of the following categories: Appetizer, Main Dish, Side Dish, Healthy Dessert.
- Teams should be prepared to only plug in one piece of equipment at a time to reduce the risk of electrical malfunction.

Round 1

- Each team will have 40 minutes to prepare the dish, plan a presentation, and clean up the preparation area.
- Contest officials may include an additional contest challenge during the preparation phase of the contest. This may consist of requiring teams to perform a specific task or skill, use an additional key ingredient, use a specific kitchen gadget or kitchen equipment supplied by the contest committee, or other related to food preparation. All teams would be required to participate in the additional challenge and the challenge would be the same for all teams.
- Teams will have access to a "grocery store" of additional ingredients which can be "purchased" and combined with the team's "key" ingredient to create an original recipe/dish during the contest. The "grocery store" will include items commonly found in grocery stores such as produce, canned goods, crackers, dairy products, etc.
- Teams must "purchase" at least two additional items from the "grocery store". Teams will also receive pricing information for "grocery store" items at their station. "Grocery store" items will be "purchased" using a pricing system and "contest currency." The currency system will be explained prior to the contest. Teams may not exceed the provided "contest currency" or trade "currency" or share grocery store items with other teams. Teams will be provided a set dollar amount to "spend" at the store. Each item in the store will be priced.

New!

Round 2

- Round 2 will be a Senior Cook-off of 1st place teams in each food category. These four teams will compete against each other in one random selected food category on the big stage in front of a live audience.
- Teams will have access to a "grocery store" of additional ingredients which can be used and combined with the team's "key" ingredient to create an original recipe/dish during the contest. The "grocery store" will be comprised of all grocery items left from Round 1. Teams can select as many items as they would like to use for Round 2.
- Food preparation and clean-up will be 20 minutes and each team will answer the same 3-4 questions. No presentation will be given.
- The Grand Champion will be awarded the People's Choice Award.

Senior Pantry Supplies

- Each team may include in their supply box the following "pantry" ingredients which they may use when preparing their dish.
- There is no requirement to use these items, nor is it mandatory that teams include these in their supply box.

Salt	1 medium onion
Pepper	2 (up to 16 oz) cans vegetables and/or fruit
Oil (up to 17 oz)	Uncooked/dried rice or pasta (up to 16 oz)
1 jar chicken bouillon	1 pound of cornstarch or flour
3 dried herbs and/or spices (up to 3 oz each)	Non-stick cooking spray

Senior Supply Box

- Each team will bring an equipment box containing only ONE of each of the following items, unless a different quantity is noted:

Bench scraper	Manual pencil sharpener
Bowls (up to 4 – any size)	Measuring spoons (1 set)
Serving utensil	Meat tenderizing mallet
Can opener	Serving bowl
Colander	Blank note cards (1 package – no larger 5x7)
Cookie cutters (up to 2)	Paper towels (1 roll)
Cutting boards (4)	Pancake turner (up to 2)
Disposable tasting spoons (no limit)	Pencils (no limit)
Dry measuring cups (1 set)	Plastic box & trash bag for dirty equipment
Electric skillet	Pot with lid
First aid kit	Potato masher
Food thermometer	Potato peeler
Extension cord (Multiple outlet or strip style)	Rolling pin
Empty tub for dirty dishes	Sanitizing wipes (1 container)
Fork	Serving platter or plate
Gloves	Skewers (6 maximum)
Grater	Skillet with Lid
Hand sanitizer	Spatulas (2)

Hot pads (up to 5)	Stirring spoon
Kitchen shears (1 pair)	Storage bags (1 box)
Kitchen timer	Tongs (2)
Knives (up to 6)	Toothpicks (no limit)
Liquid measuring cups (2)	Electric hot plate (single or double burner)
	Whisk

Senior Preparation

- Teams will have access to electricity and/or a heat source.
- Each team will create an entire dish/recipe (not a full meal) using the key ingredients provided and grocery store items.
- Teams must select and use at least two items and will be provided the maximum number of items they can select.
- New! Contest officials may include an additional contest challenge during the preparation phase of the contest. This may consist of requiring teams to perform a specific task or skill, use an additional key ingredient, use a specific kitchen gadget or kitchen equipment supplied by the contest committee, or other related to food preparation. All teams would be required to participate in the additional challenge and the challenge would be the same for all teams.
- Dishes/recipes created should include two or more servings.
- Teams should present the entire dish/recipe to the judges and communicate during their presentation what an individual serving size should be. Teams will be responsible for determining the number of servings their dish provides.
- Teams should not create side or multiple dishes with their ingredients/grocery store items.
- Teams are challenged to be creative and develop an original recipe with the ingredients provided.
- Teams will determine the exact amount of each ingredient used based on the original recipe.
- The key ingredient and/or grocery store ingredients selected should be used to garnish the dish.
- Note cards may be used to write down the recipe the team creates, along with notes related to nutrition and food safety. Teams should be exact on ingredients, preparation steps, cooking time, temperature, etc.
- A safe and sanitary working environment must be maintained during the contest. Each station will have food and kitchen safety resources. Teams should follow steps listed to ensure proper food and equipment safety is followed. Judges will be scoring teams on food and equipment safety during the preparation phase of the contest. Teams should also discuss safety steps used during the presentation phase of the contest.
- Gloves do not have to be worn throughout the contest; however, there should always be a barrier between your hands and any food touched. A barrier includes gloves and/or cooking utensils. When wearing gloves, they must be changed between handling raw meat/seafood; handling cooked items; and ready to eat items or raw vegetables to prevent cross contamination.

- Each team member must wear a hat, hair net and/or other type of hair restraint during the food preparation part of the competition. Examples of acceptable hair restraints include hairnets, bandana with hair completely pulled back, chef hat with hair restrained inside, or cap with hair **completely** tucked inside.
- Each station will have a variety of nutrition resources/references. Each team should highlight key nutrients in their dish and their functions during their presentation.
- Teams will not be required to analyze the cost of the recipe, nor will this be included in the presentation or scoring of the contest.
- Teams must clean up their preparation areas. Clean-up time is included in the 40-minute preparation allotment.

Senior Presentation and Questions

- Following the preparation phase of the contest, each team will give a 5-minute presentation to a panel of judges. ALL team members should participate in the presentation.
-

To earn maximum points, teams must use the 5-minute presentation to address the following areas of presentation according to scorecard: Dietary Guidelines, Nutrition Knowledge, Food Preparation, Safety Concerns, and Serving Size.
- At the end of 5 minutes, time will be called – additional time will not be allowed. Judges will be allowed 3 minutes to ask questions. Judges will not ask questions related to what teams should have covered during the presentation. Judges' questions will be related to general nutrition, health, chronic disease prevention or others relevant to food and nutrition. Following questions, judges will have 3 minutes to score/write comments.
- Finished dishes MAY NOT leave the judging area. Dishes must be discarded after teams complete the judging process to ensure teams in the following heats do not see what ingredients are available to gain an advantage.

Senior Scoring

- Senior teams will be ranked based upon their preparation and presentation using the traditional state 4-H contest scorecard as a basis for placing. You may check the electronic judging platform for a complete list of rankings after the contest.

Suggested Presentation Talking Points (all age divisions)

Presentation Tips for all Teams

- Speak clearly and make eye contact.
- Smile and show enthusiasm for your dish.
- Practice beforehand so the total presentation fits within the time limit.

Here's a set of speaking points that a 4-H Food Challenge team can use when presenting their dish to the judges. They should be divided among team members so everyone has a part:

---

1. Welcome & Team Introduction
   - Greet the judges warmly and state your team name and county/club.

- Each member shares their first name and role (for example: shopper, cook, timekeeper, safety monitor).

---

2. Dish Name & Inspiration
   - Say the name of the dish clearly.
   - Briefly explain why you chose it: a family recipe, seasonal ingredients, a favorite food group, or a cultural tradition.

---

3. Ingredients & Measurements
   - List each ingredient and the exact measurement used.
   - Mention any ingredient substitutions and why you made them.

---

4. Preparation Steps
   - Describe the key steps in the order you cooked them.
   - Highlight teamwork: who chopped, who mixed, who monitored the stove, etc.
   - Point out any special cooking techniques (sautéing, baking, seasoning).

---

5. Nutrition Connection
   - Identify main nutrients (protein, vitamins, fiber, calcium, etc.).
   - Explain which food groups are represented.
   - Share one or two health benefits (e.g., “The spinach provides iron for healthy blood.”).

---

6. Food Safety Practices
   - Describe how you kept food safe:
     - Handwashing before and during preparation.
     - Keeping raw and cooked foods separate.
     - Checking cooking temperatures or using a timer (teams using heat).

---

7. Plating & Presentation
   - Show the finished dish to the judges.
   - Explain your plating choices: colors, textures, garnishes, and portion size.
   - Mention how you would serve it at a meal (side dishes, drinks, etc.).

---

8. Teamwork & Skills Learned
   - Share how you worked together: communication, dividing tasks, problem-solving.
   - Mention any new skills learned (knife safety, measuring, timing).

---

9. Closing & Questions
   - Thank the judges for their time.
   - **Senior age division:** Invite them to ask questions: “We’d be happy to answer any questions about our recipe or process.”