

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Unit # \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### An Introduction to Microwave Cooking

#### **Because a microwave oven works like this. . .**

#### **. . . do this when cooking in a microwave oven.**

1. Microwaves cause molecules in food to vibrate. This creates heat that cooks the food. Heat from the food warms the container that the food is in. Use potholders to avoid burns. Dishes in a microwave oven do get warm.
2. Microwaves cannot go through metal, but they do pass through glass, ceramic, plastic, or paper. Use glass, ceramic, or plastic dishes that are safe in the microwave oven.
3. Energy in a microwave oven can be uneven. Some parts of the oven may have more energy and will cook food faster than other parts. Rearrange foods while they are cooking. Turn dishes several times during the cooking period.
4. Microwaves penetrate food only 3/4 to 1 1/2 inches. Foods cook from the outside of the dish toward the center. Stir foods while they are cooking. Bring food in the center toward the edge and food at the edge toward the center.
5. Microwaves bounce off the sides of the oven. Arrange foods so the thickest parts are toward the side of the oven.
6. A microwave oven has no heating element. This allows you to use paper and plastic products safely in a microwave oven. Plastic wrap, paper towels, and wax paper can be used to cover food and help reduce spatters.
7. Heat is inside the food, so food does not stop cooking when you turn off the oven. Remove food from the oven before it is totally cooked. Allow food some standing time to finish cooking.
8. The more food you are cooking, the less energy there is for each item to absorb. Larger amounts of food will need a longer time to cook.
9. Steam can build up inside confined areas and cause foods to explode. Pierce foods with a skin (such as egg yolks, potatoes, or sausage) to let steam escape.
10. Many ovens can operate at several different power levels. At lower than 100 percent power levels, the oven turns on and off, allowing times for the heat level to equalize. The high fat content of cheese attracts microwaves. When heating large quantities of cheese, use less than 100 percent power so that outside edges will not get too hot before the inside is heated.
11. Foods cook quickly, and most do not have time to brown. Use sauces, herbs, or toppings to make pale foods look better.
12. It is not quicker to cook foods like rice or noodles in a microwave oven. Some foods, such as bread, do not cook well in a microwave oven. Use both microwave oven and a conventional stove for the quickest and most efficient meal preparation.

