A team of culinary researchers at George Brown are reinventing classic recipes with a healthy twist for their part in the larger Connected Health and Wellness Platform.

The research team, made up of George Brown students and faculty, chose recipes that families across Canada already love—like macaroni and cheese, beef enchiladas and stuffed red peppers—and made them healthier. By changing just a few steps and ingredients, the recipes have reduced the salt, fat and sugar content without changing the taste. The recipes were chosen to represent the diverse, multicultural nature of Canada’s cuisine.

To date, the research has produced a slew of media to support the initiative: motion graphic recipe videos, a recipe booklet (available in both digital and print forms), food photography, live-action cooking shorts and a web platform optimized for desktop and tablet. The 72 recipes the team has developed span four courses (entrees, desserts, sides/appetizers and snacks) and four ethnicities.

“Your Healthy Kitchen” Cooking Shorts

The recipes were also featured in high production live-action cooking show filmed in the Health eHome at George Brown College’s Waterfront Campus. 20 videos were filmed in total—12 recipes and 8 tip videos—and most of the students in the videos were also involved in the recipe development: Culinary Management-Nutrition students Jean Niravong, John Lai, Luis Gonzalez, and Jasmin Yeung each took a turn as the featured chef, supported by host Renee Hache, a graduate of George Brown’s acting program.

A new phase of video production kicks off in late February, adding 14 additional videos for appetizers and sides. The videos are designed to encourage the adoption of healthy habits through incremental changes—swapping out an ingredient rather than completely changing a diet.

The cooking videos premiered at George Brown Applied Research Day on October 25, 2013. The Honorable Gary Goodyear, Minister of State for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (the primary funder) was on hand to introduce the videos.

A second segment of this project will involve Dr. Glenn Berall and his initiative to educate families about healthy living and eating. Dr. Berall is a pediatrician specializing in childhood obesity and came to George Brown’s Food and Innovation Research Studio (FIRSt) to inspire a new generation of children to get in the kitchen and empower them at a young age to make healthy choices for a lifetime. This new video series features a real-life mom and son team cooking alongside a GBC culinary student, learning how to incorporate children into the ritual of mealtime. The videos developed will feature some family friendly recipes including mini Meatloaf Muffins, Spring-time Risotto and Spaghetti Squash.

Learn more at georgebrown.ca/research