

# No Time to Train

## Short Lessons for School Nutrition Assistants

### Equipment How To's: Vertical Cutter Mixer (VCM)

#### LESSON OVERVIEW

**Lesson Participants:** School Nutrition assistants/technicians/food preparation staff

**Type of Lesson:** Face to face, hands-on session in kitchen working with a Vertical Cutter Mixer, commonly referred to as a VCM. It is recommended to assign no more than 8 participants per VCM during the class.

**Time Needed to Conduct Lesson:** 15 minutes

**Lesson Description:** In this lesson, participants will learn techniques for safe use of the VCM to improve quality of foods produced in the School Nutrition program.

**Lesson Objectives:**

At the end of this lesson, participants will be able to:

1. Confidently operate and maintain a VCM while producing quality foods.
2. Identify menu items appropriate for preparation with a VCM.

#### GET READY TO TEACH

Instructor can view the online video clip from NC K-12 Culinary Institute on Chopping Lettuce in a VCM and the Institute of Child Nutrition's training manual: Using Equipment Safely and Efficiently – 2002 BLT, both available here: <http://www.doe.in.gov/nutrition/indiana-no-time-train-lesson-plans>.

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### PREPARATION/PLANNING CHECKLIST

Use this Preparation Checklist to prepare for the training session. Track your progress by checking off tasks as they are completed.

Done <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tasks
	<b>Before the Training</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review Instructor's Script.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review resource materials for operation of VCM.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prepare Certificates of Completion, if desired.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create a sign-in sheet to record attendance at the in-service.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Copy Evaluation Form for completion by each participant and gather pencils.
	<b>On Training Day</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Remind participants of scheduled training.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prepare equipment items: VCM, stainless cutter blade, and strainer basket. The baffle bar is recommended, if available.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Set up Instructor's Table with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Instructor's script</li><li>• A full size sheet pan</li><li>• 2-inch solid pan</li><li>• Cutting board</li><li>• Chef's knife</li><li>• Salad spinner or colander</li><li>• Disposable gloves</li><li>• Washed head lettuce, such as Iceberg or Romaine</li></ul>

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### LESSON AT A GLANCE

(15 minutes)

Time	Topic	Task	Materials
1 minute	Introduction and Overview	Instructor will explain the advantages and safety features of using the VCM.	Instructor's Script
13 minutes	Proper operation and use of the VCM	<p>The instructor will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Describe the operation of a VCM</li><li>• Demonstrate how to chop lettuce in a VCM</li></ul> <p>Participants will practice operating the VCM.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Instructor's Script</li><li>• A full size sheet pan</li><li>• 2-inch solid pan</li><li>• Cutting board</li><li>• Chef's knife</li><li>• Salad spinner or colander</li><li>• Access to water</li><li>• Disposable gloves</li><li>• Head lettuce, such as Iceberg or Romaine</li></ul>
1 minute	Wrap Up	Re-cap and Evaluation	Evaluation Form

### Resources and references:

- Institute of Child Nutrition "Using Equipment Safely and Efficiently" - 2002 BLT  
Available to view or download at <http://www.theicn.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=116>
- Video clip – Chopping Lettuce in a VCM: North Carolina K-12 Culinary Institute, available at <http://childnutrition.ncpublicschools.gov/continuing-education/nc-k-12-culinary-institute>.

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### INSTRUCTOR SCRIPT FOR VCM

**SAY:** I am glad you are here to learn how to safely and effectively use the Vertical Cutter Mixer, often called a VCM. By learning the proper ways to use the VCM, you will accomplish a lot more and prepare food that is of better quality. Students are highly influenced by menu appearance and taste. Learning how to use our equipment properly will help us work smarter, not harder!

**SAY:** Today, we are going to explore several tasks made easier by using the VCM. This equipment is great for chopping lettuce from our produce supplier and school garden.

**DO and SAY:** Lettuce is a ready to eat food, so be sure to wear a fresh pair of disposable gloves, donned after washing hands when handling. After we have cored and washed heads of iceberg lettuce or removed the stem and washed the leaves of romaine, we can slice in half crosswise (middle of head) to give a better look to the finished chopped product. Use of the VCM is not difficult. Be sure to use the lever to lock the VCM in place, then place the strainer basket and cutter blade in the VCM over the motor shaft, and tighten the plastic nut counterclockwise. Using the baffle bar helps chop the lettuce more evenly. Next, fill the bowl halfway with clean tap water. Add as many lettuce halves as can float in the water. Secure the lid and use the pulse button carefully to chop lettuce into 1 to 2 inch diced pieces. Open the lid and lift the strainer basket from the bowl and drain well. Remember to have a cart with a sheet pan handy to hold the strainer basket for transporting the chopped lettuce. A commercial salad spinner is highly recommended to remove excess moisture.

### ACTIVITY

**DO and SAY:** Who wants to try? Allow the participants to operate the VCM.

**SAY:** See how quickly this machine chopped all of this lettuce!

***Note to Instructor:** If receiving lettuce from school garden, add: The students will really feel proud to eat the lettuce they grew and you so nicely prepared.*

**SAY:** It is time to wrap up our session. Thanks for taking the time to practice. Using the VCM will help make your work easier *and* increase meal appeal to our students. Today you earned 15 minutes in Food Production (2100) Training. Be sure you signed the roster and file your Certificate of Completion with other training documents.