

Eat Together, Eat at Home

Did you know?

Children who eat at least one meal a day with their family develop more nutritious eating habits and do better at school.

Eating with parent means kids:

- Consume higher levels of fiber, calcium, iron and essential vitamins, and are less likely to drink soft drinks and eat fried food.
- Usually eat more healthy meals than they would if preparing or choosing meals on their own.

Kids are twice as likely to eat the 5 servings of vegetables and fruit each day prescribed by the Canada Food Guide when they eat meals with their parents.

Teaching our children early to make healthy choices will benefit them as they grow into adulthood.

Children learn much of their eating habits through the patterns they observe at home.

Benefits of Family Meals

There is much more to mealtime than just food.

- Families usually save money
- Children's school performance improves
- Children develop a stronger sense of belonging
- Family communication can improve
- Children often have less behavioural problems

Mealtime encourages conversation and interaction around the dinner table, which improves a child's vocabulary and communication skills. This leads to better performance in school and fewer behavioural problems.

Mealtimes give parents a chance to lead by example and demonstrate healthy food choices. Mealtime also helps to instill a sense of belonging in children, and provides a way to transmit family values and traditions.

As a result, children who eat with their family at least once a day are less likely to smoke, drink, use drugs, or attempt suicide. Lessons taught now will follow a child throughout their life, impacting their food choices and overall health as an adult.

Tips for Great Family Mealtimes

1. Turn off the TV
2. Take phone calls later
3. Plan simple meals to prepare
4. Schedule mealtime & make it a routine
5. Eat a variety of food to keep meals interesting
6. Involve kids in grocery shopping, meal preparation, and clean up when you can
7. Talk together and laugh together
8. Make sure everyone has a chance to speak and be heard