

The Family that Eats Together Stays Healthy Together

Recent studies have shown that not only do children like to sit down at the dinner table and eat a meal with their parents, but they are more likely to eat a well-balanced, nutritious meal when they do. But with the hectic lives we seem to lead these days, getting the family all together in the same place at the same time can be a difficult chore. Between work schedules, after-school activities, errands, and the like, it seems we have less and less time. But with a few simple ideas and some planning, meal time can be an enjoyable and treasured family time.

Designate no less than one night per week to have a sit-down meal with your family. Sunday nights are usually a good choice for this because you have more time to relax and the weekend chores have been completed.

Involve your children in the meal planning and preparation. This gives them a strong sense of self and the foundation for a lifetime of healthy meal planning and preparation.

Make sure the television is off, and make it a rule that all phone calls go to voice mail or the answering machine during the meal. Take this time to visit with one another and enjoy one another's company. This is a great time to reconnect and find out what events happened this week. Take your time eating, and teach your children how to do the same in the process. Eating slowly is a healthy habit. Don't jump up and start clearing dishes and putting things away until everyone is done eating and talking.

On those days that you can't sit down as a family, try to make a habit of sitting down and chatting with them while they are eating, instead of rushing around catching up on the chores. This shows them you're interested and that you care and want to be an involved and important part of their every day life.