

### A Fact About Family Meals

'Tis the season for gatherings with family and friends. With planning, it can also be a healthy season. Scurrying around to find the perfect gift can lead to skipped meals and missed nutrients. By taking care of yourself, the holidays can be more enjoyable. Begin by spacing meals and snacks three to four hours apart, stay well hydrated by drinking water, keep low-fat snacks handy, and do not forget physical activity.

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### Balancing Food, Fun & Fitness



### Healthy Holiday Gifts

This holiday season encourage your friends and relatives to eat healthier by giving them health-related gifts.

- **Fruit & Vegetable Basket:** Give a colorful selection of fruits and vegetables, keeping them at optimum quality by assembling the basket shortly before giving it. Eating a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables every day helps maintain good health.
- **Healthy Snack Jar:** Select a clear, covered container and fill it with packages of healthy snacks such as: little boxes of raisins; non-fat snack bars; trail mix; 100-calorie packs of various crackers; dried fruit; and pretzels. These snacks are low in fat and sugar but may provide vitamins, minerals and fiber.
- **No-Salt Seasonings:** Spices and herbs that are effective in replacing the taste of salt include: black pepper; garlic or onion powder; dill seeds; basil; oregano; parsley; cumin; curry powder and ginger.
- **Sweet-Tasting Spices:** These spices reduce or eliminate the need for sugar in foods: cinnamon; allspice; cloves; and nutmeg.
- **Cookbook:** Choose one with healthful recipes that are lower in sugar, fat and calories or has only a few ingredients for quick meals.

#### TO SUBSCRIBE:

It's easy to sign up for Mealtime Solutions. Send an email or call one of the MSU Extension Offices listed at the right side of this page and leave your email address. Feel free to spread the word to your family and friends.



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## SILENCE BUSTERS

Building family traditions that last and have personal meaning for family members is an important way to develop strong family relationships. A family tradition is an activity that is significant and meaningful for family members that is repeated over time.

*What is your favorite family tradition?*

*Are there family traditions that our family would like to begin?*

*Are there family traditions that we would like to discard?*

*What have you learned from our family traditions?*

Keep it on the light side, leaving serious discussion for another time. Turn off the TV, cell phones and iPods and just listen to what each other has to say.

## HALFWAY HOMEMADE

### The Real Value Meal...Eating Together

Holiday meals and family traditions; both are hallmarks of this time of year! The family meal is one way in which a family provides stability and support to its members. A family dinner combines two basic needs: nourishment and connection.

When you are busy during the holiday season and often short on time to cook or eat before the next event, double cook. Cook twice as much when making soups, lasagna, meatloaf, and other dishes, and then freeze half for another day. It doesn't take much effort to make a bigger batch and then you won't have to cook from scratch on hectic nights.



### Cookie Cutter Sandwiches

Looking for a fun idea for lunch over the holidays? Cut bread for a sandwich using cookie cutters like stars or trees. Then decorate the top of the sandwich with fresh vegetables like pieces of lettuce or bits of tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots, green peppers, mushrooms, etc.

Use leftover bread scraps to make croutons, bread crumbs or bread pudding.

### Quick Turkey Rice Soup

Makes 6 servings, 1 1/2 cups each

- 2 teaspoons olive or vegetable oil
- 1 cup chopped onions
- 1 cup sliced fresh white mushrooms (optional)
- 1 clove garlic, minced (or substitute 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder)
- 1 15-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 3 14-ounce cans low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 10.75-ounce can sodium-reduced cream of chicken soup
- 1 cup uncooked instant brown or white rice
- 2 cups frozen or fresh chopped broccoli
- 2 cups chopped cooked skinless turkey
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper

1. WASH hands.
2. HEAT oil in large saucepan over medium-high heat.
3. ADD onions, mushrooms, and minced garlic, if using. Cook, stirring often, until onion is tender, about 5 minutes.
4. ADD tomatoes, broth, soup, rice and garlic powder, if using. Cover and cook until rice is nearly tender, 15 to 20 minutes.
5. STIR in broccoli and turkey; return to boil.
6. REDUCE heat and simmer, partially covered, until broccoli is tender and turkey is heated through, about 5 minutes.
7. REMOVE from heat; stir in pepper.

Source: Iowa State University Extension, Food and Fun for Healthy Families, 2009 Nutrition Calendar.

## QUICK FIXES

### Delicious Dips



Need a quick dip recipe for unexpected company? How about a dip that doubles as a nutritious snack or perhaps...even a mini-meal? These recipes are filled with nutrient-rich foods such as fish, peanut butter, yogurt and salsa. Serve with fruit, vegetable and whole grain cracker chip dippers.

#### Dip Tips

- Keep cut fruits, such as apples, pears, bananas and peaches from turning brown by coating them with an acidic juice such as lemon, orange or pineapple juice.
- Cover and refrigerate cut fruit and vegetables until ready to serve.
- Most cold dips taste better if refrigerated for about an hour before serving to let the flavors blend.
- Perishable foods like dips and cut fruit and vegetables should not sit at room temperature for more than two hours. If you will be serving dip for a longer period than this, set out a smaller bowl of dip and replace it with another one when it is empty. **DO NOT** add fresh dip to dip that has been sitting out. Use up any dip that has not been served within three to four days of the preparation date.

#### Salsa Yogurt Dip

Mix two parts plain yogurt with one part salsa (for example, mix 1 cup plain yogurt with 1/2 cup salsa.)

#### Tuna Veggie Dip

1 can (approx. 6 oz.) water-packed tuna, drained  
1 stalk celery, chopped fine  
1 medium carrot, chopped fine  
4 to 6 tablespoons lower fat mayonnaise  
1 teaspoon Italian seasoning or to taste  
1/8 teaspoon black pepper

Mix ingredients until well blended with sufficient mayonnaise until desired consistency is obtained. This recipe also may be used as a sandwich spread.

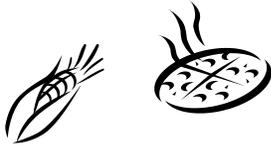
#### Creamy Peanut Dip

1/4 cup creamy peanut butter  
2 tablespoons orange juice  
1/2 cup yogurt, low fat vanilla  
In a small bowl, mix the peanut butter and orange juice until smooth. Stir in the vanilla yogurt. Cover and put in the fridge until chilled.

Source: University of Nebraska-Lincoln, <http://lancaster.unl.edu/food>



## DOABLE DINNER



Baked Pork Chops with Potatoes  
Tossed Salad  
Fruit—Milk



### Baked Pork Chops with Potatoes

- 6 bone-in pork chops (3/4-inch thick)
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 can (10 3/4 ounces) condensed cream of chicken soup, undiluted
- 3 tablespoons ketchup
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 4 medium potatoes, cut into 1/2 inch wedges
- 1 medium onion, sliced into rings

In a skillet, brown pork chops in oil. Transfer to a greased 13 x 9 inch baking dish. In a bowl, combine the soup, ketchup, Worcestershire sauce, salt and pepper. Add potatoes and onion; toss to coat. Pour over the chops. Cover and bake at 350° for 55-60 minutes or until meat juices run clear and potatoes are tender. Yield: 6 servings

**Variation:** Can add a layer of frozen shredded hash browns instead of fresh potatoes.

### Shopping List

- ✓ Pork Chops
- ✓ Oil
- ✓ Cream of Chicken Soup
- ✓ Ketchup
- ✓ Worcestershire Sauce
- ✓ Salt/Pepper
- ✓ Baking Soda
- ✓ Potatoes
- ✓ Salad
- ✓ Fruit
- ✓ Milk

*Each serving has 685 calories, 53 grams (g) carbohydrate, 36 g fat, 4 g fiber and 1,288 milligrams sodium.*

### Sugar Cookies

- |                    |                   |                   |                      |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1 cup sugar        | 1 cup brown sugar | 1 cup butter      | 3 eggs               |
| 1 teaspoon vanilla | 2 teaspoons soda  | 1/8 teaspoon salt | 2 tsp. baking powder |
| 4 cups flour       |                   |                   |                      |

Beat together sugars, butter, eggs and vanilla. Sift dry ingredients and add to mixture. Refrigerate for easier rolling. Roll dough 1/8" thick on lightly floured board. Cut with cookie cutter. Can also be rolled into balls and punched down with bottom of glass dipped in sugar. Bake at 350° for 6 to 8 minutes.

### Frosting

- |                       |                            |                       |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1/2 cup butter        | 1 cup vegetable shortening | 1 teaspoon salt       |
| 1 tablespoon vanilla  | 2 tablespoons hot water    | 2 lbs. powdered sugar |
| 4 oz. evaporated milk |                            |                       |

Beat butter and vegetable shortening together. Add salt, vanilla, and hot water. Add 1 lb. sugar. Beat well. Add remaining sugar; alternating with milk. Beat 5 to 10 minutes.

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