



A Fact About Family Meals

Children learn important lessons and skills during family mealtime, including positive eating habits that last a lifetime. Although it may seem impossible to get everyone together for a meal, the benefits of making family mealtime a tradition are worth pursuing.

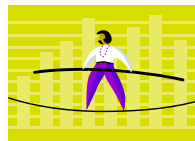
Clemson Cooperative Extension, Home & Garden Information Center



Ways to Make the Most of Family Mealtimes



Balancing Food, Fun & Fitness



Here are some simple ways to make mealtime a pleasant experience for your entire family.

- **Serve Nutritious Meals:** Family members are healthier and happier, their chances of getting tired or sick are reduced, and they will have more energy to perform better at school and work.
- **Set Regular Times for Family Meals:** This improves children’s chances of eating a variety of foods to grow, stay healthy, and maintain a healthy weight.
- **Select Meals When Everyone can Eat Together:** On Sunday, compare family members’ schedules for the upcoming week. Select times when all members can eat together, both at home and away.
- **Get Everyone Involved in the Preparation:** Encourage children to help plan menus, prepare meals and clean up the kitchen. This teaches them teamwork and cooperation.
- **Make Meals Simple & Quick:** Spend more time at the table and less time in the kitchen. Simple food served with love and laughter is better than elaborate menu items.
- **Encourage Good Conversation:** Focus on positive, uninterrupted conversation that involves everyone. Talk about the positive events of the day or upcoming family activities.

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SILENCE BUSTERS

Family conversations help everyone feel more secure and connected in a confusing and often overwhelming world. Try the following new ideas on what to talk about at the table.

Pretend that someone gave you \$1,000. Before you can buy something for yourself, you have to spend some of it on your family. What would you buy for everyone?

Something I wish my family would do more is...

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

Smart Snacking

If your child's next mealtime is more than an hour away, offer them some healthy ready-to-eat foods when they have a snack attack. Think of a snack as a mini-meal that helps provide nutrients and food energy that children need to grow, learn, and be physically active.

Easy-to-Make Snack Foods

Milk Shake-ups: Pour milk, juice and ice in a covered container. Shake!

Fruit Juice Pops: Freeze fruit juice in small paper cups or ice cube trays.

Banana Split Salad: Slice bananas lengthwise. Top with a scoop of cottage cheese. Spoon fruit cocktail over the top.

Crunchy Banana: Peel a banana. Roll it in peanut butter or yogurt and crushed cereal. Freeze!

Frozen Grapes: Freeze whole seedless grapes for a refreshing treat that is fat-free.

Cinnamon Toast: Toast whole wheat bread. Spread a little butter on top and sprinkle with cinnamon sugar.

Fancy Sandwiches: Cut bread into shapes with a cookie cutter. Spread with favorite toppings.

Party Mix: Mix 1 cup dry cereal and 1/2 cup small pretzel sticks. Place on cookie sheet. Coat with 2 tablespoons melted butter; sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Bake at 250° F for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Healthy Trail Mix: Combine 1 cup whole grain oat cereal, 1/4 cup chopped walnuts or other nuts, and 1/4 cup dried cranberries or other dried fruit.

Quick Pizza: Any bread can be used for the pizza crust. Top it with shredded low-fat mozzarella cheese and your favorite vegetables. Toast or bake it at a low setting until the cheese melts and the bread is crispy. Salsa and fat-free sour cream are optional toppings.

Roll-up Salad: Spread a leaf of lettuce or cabbage with peanut butter. Place a celery or carrot stick in the middle. Roll up the leaf with the carrot or celery in the center.

Treasure Log: Lay a piece of cheese on a thin slice of meat. Roll into a log shape.

Source: Clemson Cooperative Extension, Home & Garden Information Center

The Importance of Table Manners

Eating meals together as a family helps children develop good table manners, usually by watching and listening to parents. It is a comfortable setting for practicing social skills and manners.

Young people need to be taught table manners because they do not learn these skills by themselves. These skills include the following:

- Setting a table.
- Using a fork, knife and spoon correctly.
- Using a napkin properly.
- Waiting for others to be served before starting to eat.
- Passing dishes of food in the same direction.
- Chewing with a closed mouth.
- Taking small bites of food.
- Never talking with the mouth full.
- Being polite, saying “please” and “thank” you.”
- Waiting until everyone finishes eating before leaving the table.
- Removing a hat or cap at the dinner table.
- If you must leave the table, be sure to excuse yourself.
- Wait until after you have tasted your food before seasoning it.

Try this delicious fruity salsa to serve with grilled fish, pork or chicken, or to enjoy as a healthy snack with baked tortilla or pita chips or whole wheat crackers.

Zippy Peach Salsa

2 Tablespoons lime juice
1 Tablespoon honey
1/2 teaspoon minced garlic
1/8 teaspoon ground ginger
2 fresh peaches, peeled and diced
1/2 jalapeno pepper, seeded and minced
2 teaspoons minced fresh cilantro

In small bowl, combine the lime juice, honey, garlic and ginger; let stand for 5 minutes. Stir in peaches, peppers and cilantro. Refrigerate leftovers.
Yield 1 to 1 1/4 cups.

Source: Nourishing News, September 2008
Clemson University Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition



DOABLE DINNER



Whole Wheat Wrap Watermelon Milk



Wrap It Up!

1 serving

- 1 8- to 10-inch whole wheat tortilla

Filler Ingredients:

- 1 to 2 tablespoons “dressing” to moisten contents, such as salad dressing, low-fat mayonnaise, salsa, guacamole, hummus
- 1/2 cup of your favorite combination of chopped, shredded or leafy vegetables, such as tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots, lettuce, cabbage, spinach, onions, peppers, celery, olives, avocado, or radishes
- 1/4 cup of a protein food, such as sliced, cooked meat: flaked fish; tuna or salmon; cooked dried beans; refried beans; a scrambled egg or chopped, hard-cooked egg
- 1 to 2 tablespoons shredded cheese

Directions:

1. Follow package directions for preparing the tortilla before filling it—you will often be advised to heat the tortilla briefly (such as in a microwave oven or a hot pan) to make it more pliable.
2. Mix all filler ingredients together and spread on the tortilla, or you can layer them on the wrap and top with the dressing. Leave a 1-inch margin around the edge of the tortilla.
3. Roll up the tortilla and enjoy! Simply start rolling the tortilla from one side until the wrap is completely rolled or fold in one or both ends and roll up the tortilla.

Tip 1: To help hold the wrap together, wrap it in tin foil, wax paper, plastic wrap or parchment paper, or place in a small plastic bag such as a sandwich bag.

Tip 2: If you plan to prepare the wrap to eat later, start with a layer of well-drained lettuce leaves or other leafy green base. This will help keep the tortilla from becoming soggy.

Tip 3: Wraps are a terrific way to use up odds and ends of meats, vegetables, and cheese. The possibilities for combinations are limited only by your imagination!

Recipe courtesy of University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lancaster County,
<http://lancaster.unl.edu/food>

Shopping List

- ✓ Whole wheat tortilla
- ✓ Salad dressing
- ✓ Vegetables
- ✓ Cooked meat, dried beans, or eggs
- ✓ Shredded cheese
- ✓ Watermelon
- ✓ Milk

National Watermelon Day– August 3

Check the National Watermelon Promotion Board Web site www.watermelon.org for recipes using watermelon and tips on choosing and storing watermelons.

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