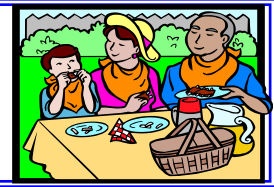


# Together we Eat



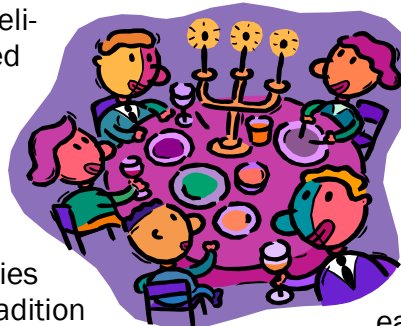
## Why WE Eat Together?



### Program Objectives

- Plan family mealtimes together
- Identify various benefits of family mealtimes together
- Recognize tips to make family mealtimes productive
- Plan to involve the children in food preparation and planning family meals together

**Remember** the good old days when eating family meals together was a norm. Dad came back from work; Mom fixed the dinner; Children helped with meal preparation and serving. Everybody ate a delicious home cooked meal and shared how their day went. The hectic lifestyle of current day has driven many families to abandon the tradition of family mealtimes altogether. Consequently, those families not having mealtimes together miss significant benefits of family mealtimes. Health and parenting experts have identified significant health, nu-



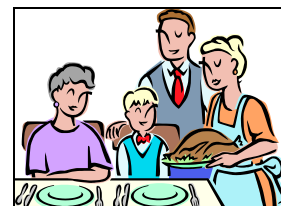
tritional, behavioral and educational benefits of eating together. Family mealtimes are more than just eating healthy meals together. Eating together enhances family communication

which effects everything from substance abuse to performance in school.

**"Together We Eat"** is a week long challenge encouraging families to eat at least one meal a day together for five or more days and to track those meals on a log sheet. Fun activities including conversation starters, tip sheet, and simple recipes are provided to facilitate the family mealtimes together.

## Goal

Plan to eat at least once a day together for 5 or more days a week. Log the meals eaten together.



## Benefits of Eating Together

### Stronger Family Bonds Benefits



- The primary benefit of eating together is to strengthen family bonds with positive communication and to develop a sense of unity .
- Children explore the safety and security provided in a family atmosphere and develop commitment to each other.
- Families build a sense of identity and children familiarize with their family values.

### Good Grades in School



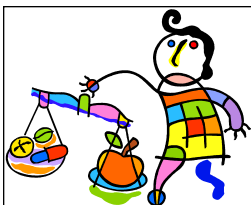
- Surveys have shown that children who eat together with their families get higher grades in schools.
- Children learn better communication skills and new vocabulary through positive meal time conversations.
- Younger children enhance their knowledge through intellectual conversations with parents and older siblings at mealtimes.

### Better Behavioral Adjustments



- Family mealtime fosters healthy development among younger children.
- Many studies have confirmed that children and teens who eat together with their families are less likely to get involved in drugs, alcohol, substance abuse, cigarette smoking, and teen pregnancy.

### Better Nutrition



- Studies indicate that families who eat together, eat better consuming more nutrient dense and less calorie dense foods.
- Adolescents who eat with their families have higher intake of key nutrients such as dietary fiber, calcium, iron, folate, vitamins B-6, B-12, C and E.
- Children develop healthy eating habits that stay with them even when they eat away from home.

### Healthy Weight Management



- Families eating together practice healthy eating habits thus promoting healthy weight.
- Studies indicate that children who eat fewer family meals and watch more TV are more likely to be overweight and stay that way.
- Healthy environment at mealtimes enhances positive attitude about personal health and nutrition among children.

## Twelve Tips to Plan Healthy Mealtimes Together

- 1** Get the entire family involved in planning fun meals. Let everyone choose a favorite menu on a designated day.
- 2** Plan distraction free meals. Make meal times electronic-free (except for emergency calls). This means no TV, no cell phones or texting.
- 3** Enjoy your conversations at the meal time. Choose positive topics and allow everyone to talk. Parents can exhibit good speaking and listening skills.
- 4** Create a relaxing ambience by playing soft music at low volume. Allow family members to take turns in choosing their favorite tunes.
- 5** Table settings set the tone of the entire meal. Involve family members to take turns in setting the table and folding napkins the way they like.
- 6** Choose a fun centerpiece. Allow family members to choose a different centerpiece such as a candle, flowers or a basket filled with conversation starters.
- 7** Make mealtime a positive experience. Make a commitment to only discuss the positive and leave the conflicting issues for some other time.
- 8** Make mealtime something to look forward to. Plan to share funny true or make belief stories. Thoughtful listening to other's opinion is important too.
- 9** Establish a few ground rules to respect everyone and no teasing, criticizing, rude comments or talking when others talk.
- 10** Set pre-meal reading time. Silent reading can keep the children busy while meals are being prepared. Loud reading provides the cook a chance to listen to something.
- 11** Take a short walk before or after dinner. Family walks not only have health benefits but provide quality talk time as well.
- 12** When eating out at a restaurant, remember to take some books with you that can be read aloud. Or take turn to play word games while waiting for the food.

**GOAL:** Plan to eat at least once a day together for 5 days or more. Focus on eating any meal together; breakfast, lunch or dinner. Write in the chart below what meals you ate together as a family.

### Meals we Ate Together Log Sheet

Days	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
MONDAY			
TUESDAY			
WEDNESDAY			
THURSDAY			
FRIDAY			
SATURDAY			
SUNDAY			

### Weekly Meal Planner

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

### How to Use the Weekly Meal Planner:

- Select the days to have family meals together.
- Name the person who chooses menu for that day.

- Chose recipes from the recipe cards on page 7 or use your own.
- Write the name of the selected recipe in the column above.

- Together, plan menu for week ahead.
- Select activity from the tips sheet.
- Enjoy your meals together!

## Conversation Starters



Having trouble finding new ideas to start conversations?

Use the conversation starter cards that may help keep things lively at the table.

Cut out the cards and place them in a bowl.

Place the bowl on the table – and take turns to pick a card to get a conversation going.

What is the most funny thing that happened to you today?

What was the most unexpected compliment you gave to someone recently?

What country of the world you would like to visit? Why?

What is the most funny thing that happened to someone else today?

What are some of the recipes you would like to try?

What is the profession that interests you? Why?

What was the most unexpected compliment you received recently?

What is a new word that you learned today?

What are your favorite foods we make at home?

What is the hardest thing you did today?

What is the most interesting thing you read today?

What makes somebody a good friend?

What is the nicest thing you did for someone today?

What would be the one thing happened today that you would like to change and why?



## Crazy, Curly Broccoli Bake

Preparation time: 25 minutes

Serves:6

### Ingredients:

1½ cups whole wheat corkscrew pasta, dry  
 3 cups broccoli, frozen, chopped  
 1 10.5-oz.can low-fat cream of broccoli soup, condensed  
 ½ cup skim milk  
 2 tablespoons plain bread crumbs  
 ¼ teaspoon salt-free seasoning blend

## Technicolor Vegetable Pizzas

Preparation time: 20 minutes

serves: 5

### Ingredients:

3 cups frozen mixed vegetables with mushrooms  
 5 slices Italian bread (1 oz. slices; each ~ 1" thick and 5" long)  
 1 tablespoon olive oil  
 ½ cup prepared pizza sauce  
 1 cup finely chopped tomato  
 ½ cup very finely diced onion  
 1 tablespoon dried oregano leaves  
 1 teaspoon garlic powder  
 2 ½ tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

## 5 Happiness Fried Noodles

Preparation Time: 30 minutes

serves 5

### Ingredients:

10 cups (80 oz) water  
 1 lb egg noodles  
 1 Tbsp olive oil  
 3 cups bean sprouts  
 1 cup bamboo shoots, julienned  
 ½ cup carrots, shredded  
 ½ cup dried shiitake mushrooms, soaked, stems removed, and julienned  
 2 green onions, julienned  
 ½ tsp salt  
 1 tsp sugar

## Italian Baked Cod

Preparation Time: 30 minutes

Serves:4

### Ingredients:

¾ cup onion, chopped  
 1 Tbsp black olives, sliced  
 1 tsp garlic, minced  
 1 tsp basil  
 1 Tbsp olive oil  
 12 oz cod fillets  
 1 can (28 oz) tomatoes, diced

## Broccoli Frittata

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

serves:4

### Ingredients:

2 cups broccoli florets, chopped  
 ½ cup chicken, cooked and chopped  
 ½ cup tomatoes, chopped  
 ¼ cup onions, chopped  
 ¼ tsp dried tarragon  
 1 Tbsp margarine or butter spray  
 8 egg whites

## Chicken Torta

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

serves:4

### Ingredients:

2 cups cooked, shredded chicken  
 2/3 cup rinsed and drained red kidney beans  
 1 teaspoon chili powder  
 2 cups prepared fresh salsa  
 2 cups shredded romaine lettuce  
 4 thin white onion slices  
 1/2 cup shredded low fat Monterey Jack cheese  
 4 Bolillo or French rolls, cut in half lengthwise  
 2 radishes, sliced

**Instructions:**

Pre-heat oven to 350° F and place oven rack in middle-high position. Microwave frozen vegetables, then pat dry. Brush all bread slices lightly with oil and spread each with ~ 1½ table-spoons sauce. Combine all vegetables in a medium-sized bowl. Carefully spoon vegetable mixture equally onto bread slices. Sprinkle with oregano and garlic powder and then with cheese. Bake about 5-7 minutes, until bread is brown on the edges and all vegetables are piping hot. Serve immediately.

**Nutrition Information per Serving:**

calories: 182, total fat: 5.0g, saturated fat: 1.1g, % calories from fat: 24%, % calories from saturated fat: 5%, protein: 6g, carbohydrates: 29g, cholesterol: 2mg, dietary fiber: 5g, sodium: 339 mg

**Instructions:**

Preheat oven to 350°F. Cook pasta according to package directions. Place frozen broccoli in large microwave safe and oven proof dish and cook for 2 minutes on HIGH. Coarsely chop cooked broccoli. Mix soup with skim milk, and add to chopped broccoli. Add cooked pasta and mix. Top with bread crumbs and seasoning blend. Bake in oven for 10-15 minutes until heated through

**Nutrition Information per serving:**

calories: 164, total fat: 2.2g, saturated fat: 0.6g, % calories from fat: 11%, % calories from saturated fat: 3%, protein: 8g, carbohydrates: 31g, cholesterol: 2mg, dietary fiber: 5g, sodium: 351mg

**Instructions:**

Preheat oven to 450° F. Sauté onions and garlic in oil. Add tomatoes, olives, and basil. Simmer until thickened, about 10 minutes. Place in non-stick baking dish. Top with cod fillets. Bake covered about 10 minutes until fish flakes easily. Serve.

**Nutrition Information per serving:**

calories: 170, total fat:4.5g, saturated fat:0.5g, % calories from fat: 24%, % calories from saturated fat: 3%, protein:17g, carbohydrates: 13g, cholesterol: 35mg, dietary fiber: 4g, sodium: 520mg

**Instructions:**

In a large pot, bring 10 cups of water to a boil on high heat. Cook noodles in boiling water until tender (approximately 5-7 minutes), drain and set aside. Heat a non-stick wok or pan over high heat. Add 1/2 Tbsp olive oil, swirling to coat the pan, add noodles and pan-fry until noodles are golden (about 7-10 minutes). Remove noodles from wok. Add remaining 1/2 Tbsp olive oil to wok, add vegetables, and stir-fry until just cooked (about 5-7 minutes). Return noodles to the wok, add salt, sugar, and soy sauce. Stir to combine and serve.

**Nutrition Information per serving:**

calories: 450, total fat:7g, saturated fat:1.5g, % calories from fat: 14%, % calories from saturated fat: 3%, protein:20g, carbohydrates: 79g, cholesterol: 95mg, dietary fiber: 7g, sodium: 390mg

**Instructions:**

In a medium bowl, combine chicken, beans, chili powder and 1 cup of fresh salsa. In a second bowl, combine lettuce, onion, radishes, and cheese. Place equal amounts of chicken and lettuce mixtures inside of each roll. Spoon ¼ cup fresh salsa over lettuce and close sandwich.

**Nutrition Information per serving:**

calories: 572, total fat:10.7g, saturated fat:3.7g, % calories from fat: 17%, % calories from saturated fat:6%, protein:39g, carbohydrates: 80g, cholesterol: 73mg, dietary fiber: 8g, sodium: 213mg

**Instructions:**

Sauté broccoli, chicken, tomato, onion, and tarragon in margarine in a medium saucepan or electric frying pan over medium heat until broccoli is tender-crisp. Pour lightly beaten egg whites evenly over all ingredients. Cover and cook for 6-8 minutes until firm on bottom and almost set on top. Cut into wedges to serve.

**Nutrition Information per serving:**

calories: 110, total fat:3.5g, saturated fat:0.5g, % calories from fat: 29%, % calories from saturated fat: 4%, protein:14g, carbohydrates: 4g, cholesterol: 15mg, dietary fiber: 2g, sodium: 160mg



# Shopping List

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Before you go to the store, have a snack. Otherwise, adding many items to your shopping cart is tempting when your stomach is empty.

**Websites:****North Dakota State University Extension Service**

<http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/foodwise/food-family>

<http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/foods.html>

**National Center on Alcohol and Substance Abuse**

<http://casafamilyday.org/familyday/>

**Promoting Family Meals Project (Purdue University)**

<http://www.cfs.purdue.edu/cff/promotingfamilymeals/index.html>

**Washington State University, Cooperative Extension**

<http://www.nutrition.wsu.edu/ebet/toolkit.html>

**American Dietetics Association**

<http://www.eatright.org/Public/>

**Books:**

1. *Surprising Power of Family Meals*, by Miriam Weinstein, Streetforth (2006), ISBN;1586421131
2. *Barbarians at the Plate; Taming and Feeding the American Family* by Marialisa Calta, Perigee Trade(2005), ISBN:0399531521
3. *Secrets of Feeding a Healthy Family* by Ellyn Satter, Kelcy Press(2005) ISBN;0967118905
4. *Emeril's There's a Chef in my World* by Lagasse, Emeril, HarperCollins; First Edition (October 3, 2006)ISBN: 0060739266
5. *Kids Cook1-2-3* by Gold Rozanne, Bloomsbury USA Children's; First Edition (October 3, 2006)ISBN: 1582347352
6. *The Food Cycle* by Smith, David, Wayland (March 31, 1997)ISBN: 0750221259
7. *Dinner With Dad; How I Found my Way Back to the Family Table* by Cameron Stracher, Random House(2007)ISBN; 1400065372

**For more information on Family Mealtimes visit:  
<http://www.nutrition.wsu.edu/ebet/toolkit.html>**