

Turn Mealtime Into Family Time Tips

Having mealtime as a family is probably one of the easiest and most important activities you can do to promote healthy eating. Surprised? I know it sounds too easy; but honestly, sometimes the simplest things turn out to be the most important. Kids are little sponges and they are learning and forming their nutrition habits throughout the day. Eating together as a family helps build the family bond and allows for special time for everyone to share their day.



Talking and sharing the day is a fun way for families to be together and keep up with each other's busy lives. That includes the kids! They are busy too with all kinds of activities and social interactions affecting their day.

During mealtime kids learn about foods and their parent's food preferences. Children are starting to form lifelong associations with food (positive or negative) and their own food choices (what they "like" and what they "don't like").

Here are some easy tips and guidelines to help you turn mealtime into fun family time.

- ❖ Pick one meal a day that works for the whole family.
- ❖ If your schedules don't allow you to eat as a family every day, then pick one day a week to start. That's ok.
- ❖ Gradually add another day until you are having one meal a day as a family.
- ❖ Set a time for family meals. This makes it easier for everyone to plan their schedules.
- ❖ Eat together at the table. It's easier to talk to each other when you are face to face.
- ❖ During mealtime, focus on each other by turning off the TV, cell phones and even iPods.
- ❖ Keep mealtime a fun time for the family to catch up and share their day.
- ❖ Parents and older siblings can be a great role model for good eating habits.
- ❖ Keep it fun. Kids can make name cards for their seats.
- ❖ Keep meals from lasting too long. If your child gets fussy, let them be excused and take their plate to the sink.
- ❖ Introduce one new food item at least 3 times a week.

With set meal times and a fun family experience, kids will look forward to eating together as a family while learning about healthy eating.

Family meal time helps family stay in tune with each other, share wisdom, model healthy eating habits and yes...slow down the eating time.

Enjoy your meal time as a family and help your child build some healthy habits.

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