

October: Eat Better, Eat Together

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October is National Eat Better, Eat Together Month and when families eat together, meals are likely to be more nutritious and kids who eat regularly with their families are less likely to snack on unhealthy foods and are more likely to eat fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.



Beyond health and nutrition, family meals provide a valuable opportunity for children and parents to reconnect. When adults, children and teenagers eat together children do better in school, have fewer behavioral problems, and communication improves. When is the last time you sat down and ate a meal with your family? If you cannot remember, October is a great time to start having a meal with your family as often as you can. Check out the following tips to make family meals happen at your house.

Tips on How to have more Family Meals:

Schedule Family Meals.

- To plan more family meals, look over the calendar and choose a time when everyone can be there. Figure out which obstacles are getting in the way of family meals and see if there are ways to work around them.
- Even if it is only once a week, making it a habit to have family meals once a week is a great start and you can work your way up to 2 to 3 times a week.
- Don't forget that breakfast and lunch are meals as well; there are no rules that say family meals should only happen in the evening.



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Prepare Meals Ahead of Time.

- It is important to make a shopping list and make time to go to the grocery store so you have foods on hand to create meals.
- Try doing some prep work for meals on the weekend to get ready for the week ahead. On a night when you have extra time, cook double and put one meal in the freezer so there is a backup plan for busy nights.
- Remember that a meal at home does not have to be complicated or take a long time.

Involve Kids at Family Meals.

- Family meals can be fun and it is important to involve kids in them.
- Younger kids can put plates on the table, pour beverages, or fold napkins.
- Older kids can get ingredients, wash produce, mix, and stir. You could even have your teens be the cook for a night and you could be their helper in the kitchen.

During mealtime, make your time at the table pleasant and enjoy being together as a family. Remember to keep your interactions positive at the table. Ask your kids about their days and tell them about yours. Give everyone a chance to talk. If you cannot remember the last time you sat down for a family meal, take the time this October to start a family tradition of eating together and eating better.

Sources:

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