

From the Health Clinic



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FAMILY MEAL TIME

Eating meals together is a great way to improve the health of children and parents while spending quality time together. Eating together as a family provides an opportunity to model healthy eating habits. When families eat together they are more likely to eat healthier. There are many benefits of eating together such as: improving communication, modeling manners and offering stability, introducing new foods, preventing disruptive behavior, and improving academic performance. Eating as a family also provides parents with benefits such as: an opportunity to teach values and traditions, eating healthier, and saving money by eating out less often.

“Family Meal Times” can be a fun way to connect and establish a routine. Parents can involve their children in creating a weekly meal plan. Use this meal plan to create a shopping list for the week. This can be a fun learning opportunity for children of different ages as you can have them help create the list by brainstorming or practicing their writing skills. Involving the whole family during grocery shopping provides parents with the

chance to show their children where their food comes from and allows them to be part of the healthy food choice process.

Sometimes preparing dinner can be more fun than eating it. Take some of the stress out of dinner preparation by giving everyone in the family a task. When children are involved in making dinner they are more likely to eat it. Depending on the age of the kids they can be involved in anything from washing vegetables, to stirring, to grating cheese. Having kids help cook and clean also teaches them valuable skills and responsibility. For super busy days meals can be prepared ahead of time so that your family can have a chance sit together and eat. Casseroles are a food that can be prepared ahead of time and then frozen for days when life gets crazy.

When you actually sit down for to eat it is important to create a pleasant atmosphere. Turn off TVs and avoid answering phones during dinner. Conversation is a key part of “Family Meal Time”, you can talk about your day, what you have planned for the weekend, or have everyone tell a joke.

“Family Meal Time” is a great way to establish a weekly routine and spend quality time together. It will improve the health and happiness of the whole family.

Dinner Table Talk

1. If you could have picked your own name what would it be?
2. What animal would you be?
3. Which is your favorite cartoon character?
4. Which character in a book best describes who you are?
5. If you could cook for me what would it be?
6. If you were granted three wishes from a genie what would you wish?
7. Do you do dance crazy when no one is looking?
8. Why is the alphabet in that order? Is it because of that song?
9. Tell me the five best things about you.
10. What does the word "success" mean to you?

11. Who would you rather be: an NBA ballplayer, the mayor, a famous explorer, or a movie star? Why?
12. Which of your friends do you think I like the most? Why?
13. What would be the ideal allowance? Tell me how you would use it.
14. What Punishment have I given you that you thought was really unfair? Why?
15. If you could keep your room any way you wanted, how would it look?
16. What are the qualities that make a good friend?
17. What was your favorite toy when you were little?
18. What do you think of my driving?
19. What is the most enjoyable thing our family has done together in the last three years?
20. What do you think is beyond the stars?
21. Name two things we should do as a family this weekend?
22. If you were going to have a weird, unusual pet, what would it be? Why would you want that pet?



Food tastes better when you
eat it with your family.