

Create Family Mealtime // 4 Tips for Success

CREATE FAMILY MEALTIME: 4 TIPS FOR SUCCESS



LIVE WELL UTAH

We know eating together as a family is important, but sometimes it can be tough. Try these tips to make your family meals a success, and make an effort to eat together as a family during National Family Mealtime month in September.

With school starting, it may feel like your family is getting pulled in all directions. Piano practice, football games, swim team tryouts, school projects, and study groups may be filling up your family's schedule. An important way to keep your family connected in busy times is having meals together.

Family meals have been associated with improved diets, academic performance and vocabularies. They also decrease the risk of children experiencing depression, eating disorders, and drug/alcohol use.

This may be why September has been declared National Family Mealtime month, and Healthy Family Meals month in Utah. Here are some tips that can help make family mealtime a habit.

1. **Plan and prioritize.** Make family mealtime a priority by planning it in your day. Plan when, where, and what you will be eating. Let your family know that it is important for everyone to be present. Take time each month (or a few times a month) to plan your meals. This can help you save time and money throughout the month.
2. **Make it work for your family.** Is family dinnertime not working? Try family breakfast, lunch, or afterschool snack time. Just take time to sit together, share a healthy meal (or snack), and connect as a family.
3. **Ditch the electronics.** With so much socializing happening online, we can lose touch with the art of conversation. Help your family spend time together undistracted by turning off or putting away cell phones and other electronic devices. Parents, this includes your devices too!
4. **Keep it simple and fun.** Family mealtime doesn't need to

be a source of stress. By planning your meal and involving the whole family in the prep and cleanup, you can keep it from being a burden. Also, don't put too much pressure on yourself that it has to be a certain way (see tip # 2). Use this time to talk about your days and fun memories. Avoid discussing topics that may lead to contention: discipline, etc.

Equipped with these tips, we invite you to take the pledge to start the habit of more family mealtimes this September.

For more family mealtime tips, check out our resources at CreateBetterHealth.usu.edu.

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