



Family Meals

Take a family approach to healthy eating

- Eat together as often as possible. Mealtimes are one of the most common times that children talk with parents. Silence cell phones, the TV and other distractions during meals.
- Focus on what's important – being with family. It's nice to share a home-cooked meal, but if it's not practical because of time or other reasons, don't stress out. Enjoy a quick meal together.
- Be a role model. If you are willing to try new foods, your children probably will, too.
- Encourage children to try new foods, but don't force or bribe them. Nobody wins in power struggles with food.
- Make the same meal for all family members. If children are routinely expected to eat the same healthy foods as the rest of the family, then they will learn to like these foods. On the other hand, if children are allowed to demand macaroni and cheese when everyone else is having spaghetti, the stage is set to encourage picky eating.



Photo credit: USDA, Food and Nutrition Service

**For more information, please
contact your county UW-
Extension office:**

<http://counties.uwex.edu>

Source and for more information, [Take a Family Approach to Healthy Eating and Physical Activity](http://fyi.uwex.edu/news/2013/03/14/take-a-family-approach-to-healthy-eating-and-physical-activity/), <http://fyi.uwex.edu/news/2013/03/14/take-a-family-approach-to-healthy-eating-and-physical-activity/>

Why family meals?

Research suggests that children who eat meals with their families eat more healthy foods (and fewer less healthy foods), do better in school and have more positive family interactions. Family members also influence each other. For example, children are more likely to eat a food if they see their parents eat it. And, parents are more likely to buy a food if they know that their children like it.

Make meals and memories together. It's a lesson they'll use for life.

Kids like to try foods they help make. It's a great way to encourage your child to eat fruits and vegetables. Give them small jobs to do. Praise their efforts. Kids love helping in the kitchen. Parents love knowing that their child is also learning skills they'll use for life.

At the store

- Let your kids be produce pickers. Not only are they more likely to eat the fruits and veggies, but it can be fun and educational! Ask young children to help you find vegetables that are a certain color or count the number of apples in a bag. Have older children compare prices to find the best buy or share what they know about where or how the fruit or vegetable is grown.
- Offer your child the choice between two or three foods to guide them toward foods you want them to eat. For example, you might ask "would you like raisin bran or toasted oats cereal?" You are giving your children a choice but not encouraging them to select a cereal that you don't want them to have.

Source: Core message website

In the kitchen

- Encourage children to help with preparing food. Children will learn about food preparation. You will save time once they can prepare food without help from you.



Photo credit: USDA, Food and Nutrition Service

- Ask kids to help by getting out plates or setting the table.
- Encourage children to help with clearing the table and cleaning up.

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Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).

For any other information dealing with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) issues, persons should either contact the USDA SNAP Hotline Number at (800) 221-5689, which is also in Spanish or call the [State Information/Hotline Numbers](#) (click the link for a listing of hotline numbers by State); found online at http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/contact_info/hotlines.htm.

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