

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Importance of Family Mealtime

We all know that time spent together as a family is important—and also that sharing regular meals is particularly beneficial. But just how valuable is it that you all gather around one table and eat together? Because life is busy—and between your work, after-school kid activities, picky eaters, and the stress of putting together a real meal—being a short-order cook and eating over the kitchen sink actually might sound semi-appealing. Let's take a break from focusing on all the things that could keep us from making time for family meals.

Eating meals together as a family helps kids in many ways:

- Families have been shown to make better food choices when food is eaten together.
- Kids are more likely to try new foods.
- Allows time for parents to bond with their kids.

Tips for Planning Family Meals:

- Keep it simple: The food you eat doesn't have to be special or fancy. Start with the food you normally eat, sit at the table, and enjoy the meal together.
- Get the kids involved: Include your kids in getting the meal ready to eat. They can pick out a vegetable, help with the cooking, or set the table.
- Avoid interruptions: Put your phone away, turn off the TV, and set aside games and toys. Enjoy the company of your family.
- Take your time: Don't rush! Allow at least 20 minutes for kids to have plenty of time to finish eating.

Mealtimes should be a time for families to relax. Keep the conversation upbeat and happy. Don't battle over foods not eaten. Save serious conversations for another time. When family meals are pleasant, kids do their best job of eating well and enjoying family mealtime!

Visit www.usda.gov for more information on this topic or contact, Katherine Pinto, EFNEP and SNAP-Ed Agent, kdpinto@ksu.edu or 620-232-1930.

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