
Family Meals Mean Healthier Kids



What Are the Benefits of Family Meals?

- More healthy foods (like fruits and vegetables) and less unhealthy foods (like fried foods and soda) are consumed by the whole family.
- Kids are more likely to be in a healthy weight range.
- Kids who eat with the family at least five days per week are less likely to use tobacco, alcohol and marijuana.
- Kids get higher grades, are more connected at home, and communicate more effectively.

Tips to Make Family Meal Time Happen

- **Be flexible:** family meal times don't have to happen at dinner! Eat together for breakfast or lunch, if that works better for your family. Also, family meals can happen anywhere, not just at home.
- **Make a plan:** involve the family in making a weekly menu based on everyone's schedule. This will also make grocery shopping easier.
- **Keep it simple:** meals don't have to be elaborate to be enjoyable. A green salad with a baked chicken breast is tasty, healthy and easy to prepare.
- **Prepare on your days off:** main dishes can be prepared and frozen for use later. They only require reheating on the day you want to eat them.

Time Saving Tips

- Use pre-washed salad and pre-cut veggies.
- Use canned or frozen fruits and veggies. They last longer and are already washed and trimmed. Be sure to choose cans of low sodium veggies and fruit packed in juice.
- Use instant brown rice or other quick cooking whole grains like quinoa.
- Make a sandwich or stuff a pita for a quick and portable meal.
- Cook enough for two meals when you cook... eat one serving and freeze the other.
- Try quick stove top meals that need only one pot like a stir fry or pasta with sauce.



Easy Summer Family Meal Recipes



Black Bean and Cheese Quesadillas

Ingredients:

6 (10-inch) whole wheat tortillas
1 ½ cup salsa, plus more for garnish
2 cups cooked black beans, drained
2 cups shredded Monterey Jack or cheddar cheese
Non-stick cooking spray
Sour cream (optional)
Guacamole (optional)

Directions:

Place 3 tortillas on a cutting board. Spread ½ cup of the salsa evenly over each of the tortillas. Top with beans and sprinkle evenly with cheese. Top with remaining tortillas. Preheat oven to 375°F and bake quesadillas on a baking sheet for about 15 minutes, or until heated through and light golden brown. Alternately, spray a large skillet with oil spray and heat over medium high heat. Flip and continue to cook until cheese is melted and tortillas are golden brown. Cut each quesadilla into 6 wedges and serve with the remaining salsa, sour cream, and guacamole, if you like.

Recipe courtesy of Whole Foods Market. Visit wholefoodsmarket.com for more great recipes.

Cucumber and Watermelon Salad

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons lime juice
1 tablespoon granulated sugar
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ cup minced fresh parsley
2 medium unpeeled cucumbers, washed, ends removed, sliced lengthwise then sliced crosswise to make semi-circles
3 cups watermelon, cut into 1-inch cubes (about 1 pound)



Directions:

Whisk together the lime juice, sugar, and salt in a large bowl. Stir in the parsley. Add the cucumbers. Toss with a rubber spatula to coat all of the cucumber pieces. Gently fold in the watermelon cubes. Cover, set aside and allow juice from the watermelon to mix with the other juices. Stir gently and let stand at room temperature for 1 hour before serving.

Recipe courtesy of Kids Eat Right. Visit eatright.org/kids for more great recipes.



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July 2014

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