

Benefits of Family Meals

Meals together have decreased 33% in the past 20 years. And families that do spend time together at the table spend less than 12 minutes eating dinner.

Bring everyone back together with the goal of spending 3-5 meals together per week.

Physical Benefits

- Lowers rate of weight problems
- Lowers the likelihood of eating disorders

Social and Emotional Benefits

- Increases self-esteem
- Builds greater resiliency
- Decreases risk of depression

Other Benefits

- Better academic performance
- Lower risk of substance abuse
- Lower risk of teen pregnancy

The way you feed your child molds their relationship with food. Consider the following plating methods when feeding your child:

Pre-Plating Drawbacks

- Tend to over-serve portions
- Expectation to eat what is on the plate

Family Style Meals

- Creates autonomy through self-serving
- Encourages age-appropriate portions

Your family table goal should be to create a pleasant, welcoming, calm, and respectful environment. So how do you serve a family style meal?

1. **Plan** the menu for less stress (Plan monthly, weekly, daily, just dinner, or whatever works!)
2. **Prepare** food. Can the kids help? (Decide what type of meal: made from scratch, semi-home-made, sheet pan, or one-pot meals.)
3. **Plate and Put** on the table.
4. **Pass** food around the table to self-serve.
5. **Include one "safe" food** that you know they like at each meal (ex: bowl of fruit, glass of milk, etc.).

3 C'S OF DINNERTIME

- **Cultivate Manners** - Please, Thank you, May I?
- **Foster Communication** - Minimize distraction and interruptions
- **Connect**

POSITIVE FEEDING: Love with Limits Feeding

Parent decides: What, when, and where

Child decides: Whether they are hungry and how much they want

Kids schedule for being offered something to eat:

Toddlers: Every 2-3 hours (3 meals and 3 snacks)

School Age: Every 3-4 hours (3 meals and 1-2 snacks)

Teens: Every 4-5 hours (3 meals and 1 snack)

90/10 Rule: 90% food groups and 10% sweets/treats (1-2 times per day). Complete restriction of sweets increases desire and uncontrolled eating when the restricted food is available.



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