

The Importance of Family Dinner

By Miriam Goodman, School Business Administrator

Last month, the nutrition subcommittee of the School Wellness Advisory Council discussed the importance of family dinners with the hope of raising awareness of the benefits associated with families having a meal together. In the midst of sports practices, dance lessons, religious activities, late work meetings, and other events, finding time for everyone in your family to sit down to a meal together can certainly be a challenge.



The following has been excerpted from the full article: [Family Dinners are Important](#), by Jeanie Lerche Davis

Research suggests that when families dine together, they tend to eat more vegetables and fruits -- and fewer fried foods, soda, and foods with trans fats. The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASA) recently reported on a national phone survey of 1,000 teens and 829 parents of teens. Eating dinner as a family helped kids in many ways. It helped them get better grades, and kept them away from cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana, and more. Some of the benefits and tips for organizing the family dinner discussed in the article include:

Benefits

- Everyone eats healthier meals.
- Kids are less likely to become overweight or obese.
- You and your kids will talk more.
- You'll be more likely to hear about a serious problem.
- There will be less stress and tension at home

Tips for making it happen

- Set a goal. Twice a week, perhaps? Build from there.
- Keep it simple. Family meals don't have to be elaborate.
- Be prepared. Keep ingredients for healthful meals on hand, including plenty of fruits and vegetables.
- Let kids help prepare meals and set the table

Here's another hint -- no TV allowed, no phones answered! This is time for listening to each other, sharing the day's stories, and nurturing the family connection.

Other related articles:

[The most important thing you can do with your kids? Eat dinner with them.](#)

[Why the family meal is important](#)

[The Family Dinner Project](#)

[The Importance of Family Mealtime](#)

[Mealtime talk that supports literacy development](#)