

Nutrition factsheet



Dinner is one of the best times for families to reconnect, share daily events, and continue to deepen relationships. According to a recent national survey, the average household prepares and eats dinner at home five nights a week. Despite the busy schedules of today's families, making time for dinner is not only important but also easier than you may think.

Edited by NCND staff

Technical review by the Nutrition Education for the Public Dietetic Practice Group

Making the Most of Family Mealtime

Reap the benefits

Would it surprise you that children who eat regularly with their families tend to have healthier eating patterns that contain more fruits and vegetables and less fried foods, soda, and saturated fat compared with those who do not eat regularly with their families? In fact, they also have a higher intake of calcium, iron, fiber, and vitamins - all of which are important for children's growing bodies. Children learn important lessons and skills during dinner, including viewing food as nourishment for active and healthy bodies. Establishing positive eating habits in childhood years helps children build skills that can last a lifetime.

Parents and caregivers can set a positive example for children at mealtime by using and teaching appropriate table manners. Eating dinner together is not only nutritionally important, it can also help your children develop social skills in a comfortable setting. For example, when each family member takes a turn to speak and listen, it reinforces the importance of polite conversation.

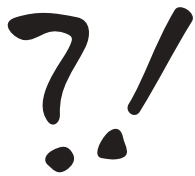
Creating a positive mealtime atmosphere

Create a welcoming eating atmosphere and make the most of your dinner-time by trying these ideas:

- Turn off the television and radio so everyone can focus on conversation without distraction.
- Let the answering machine pick up calls or turn off the phone ringer to avoid dinner interruptions. A phone call can always be returned after dinner.
- Discuss positive events of the day or upcoming family activities. Criticism and unpleasant topics during meals create a stressful atmosphere.
- Remember that kids often take more time to eat than adults do. Take your time through dinner and enjoy the extra few minutes sitting at the table before cleaning up.
- Offer a variety of choices from all food groups. If you label foods as good or bad, health foods or junk foods, you can set up a situation where your children may feel deprived of certain foods. Then they may find other ways to sneak them in. If you offer all types of foods with a trusting atmosphere, your children will likely choose a nutritious variety.

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Information

The American Dietetic Association/National Center for Nutrition & Dietetics (NCND).

For food and nutrition information and a referral to a registered dietitian in your area, call the Consumer Nutrition Hot Line:

800/366-1655

Visit ADA on the World Wide Web:
www.eatright.org

National Pork Board
Web site:
www.otherwhitemeat.com

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AMERICAN DIETETIC ASSOCIATION
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Making the most of your time together

In a recent survey, 38 percent of family cooks said their children have a major influence on what is purchased and prepared, so why not get them involved in the cooking and grocery shopping process? Most households spend 35 minutes preparing and 30 minutes eating dinner each night. This 65 minutes represents a significant portion of the time families spend together each day. By combining lessons in food preparation, food safety, and manners with quality time, everyone wins.

Here are some easy ideas for involving children in shopping, meal preparation, and home food safety:

- Encourage and help younger children to wash their hands before helping in the kitchen.
- Ask children to help with measuring and mixing ingredients and setting and clearing the table.
- Encourage children to help look for recipes in cookbooks or on Web sites. With your guidance, children can develop the skills for planning a delicious, nutritious, and balanced menu.
- Involve older children when creating your grocery list or when shopping to teach the skill of staying within a budget.

Making the most out of meals - that is, making them delicious, nutritious, and enjoyable - starts with just a little planning and some commonsense tips. Check out the recipe below - and how about including the kids?

Lemon Pork Chops

4 pork loin chops, each 3/4-inch thick
2 teaspoons lemon pepper
2 tablespoons cider vinegar
1/4 cup lemon marmalade or jelly

Spray nonstick skillet with vegetable oil; place skillet over medium heat. Sprinkle lemon pepper on both sides of chops. Add chops to hot skillet and sauté about 4 minutes on each side. Remove chops from skillet; cover and keep warm. Add vinegar and marmalade to skillet and stir until marmalade melts. Return chops to skillet, turning once to coat with sauce. Serve immediately. Serves 4.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving:

210 calories, 6 grams fat, 2 grams saturated fat, 60 mg cholesterol, 260 mg sodium, 14 grams carbohydrate, 25 grams protein



The Other
White Meat:

