



NEWSLETTER

November 2009

Volume 2, Issue 5

Family Meal Time

Why Eat Together?

Children who eat meals with their families tend to have:

- Improved communication with their parents
- fewer behaviour problems
- better school performance
- greater vocabulary
- a healthier diet

They also:

- Are less likely to smoke, use drugs, drink alcohol or have eating disorders
- Develop a sense of belonging, feel more secure and stable
- Are more likely to try new foods and enjoy a greater variety of foods

Benefits of family meals to parents are:

- Mealtime provides a way to teach values and traditions
- You save money by eating out less often
- You eat healthier meals
- You model healthy eating to your children

From www.eattogether.net

Menu Planning

Planning meals in advance is helpful. It doesn't have to take a lot of time. Spend a few minutes each week to plan your meals, and you will save time overall.

Weekly meal planning helps you to:

- Serve your family healthy and delicious meals
- Save time and money
- Avoid last minute decisions
- Reduce take-out meals

Make dinner planning easier by using theme nights.

Your children will like the routine of knowing what to expect for dinner.

You will have fewer decisions to make.

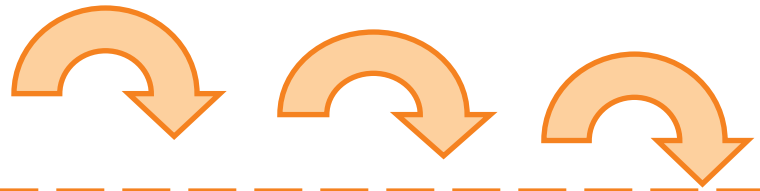
Ideas include:

- Mexican Mondays
- Tofu Tuesdays
- Pasta Wednesdays
- Pizza Thursdays
- Fish Fridays
- Stir-fry Saturdays

Adapted from www.eattogether.net

Communities for Kids, in partnership with Success by 6®, engages families and communities in children's healthy early development.

Healthy Eating



Canada's Food Guide

Eat well with *Canada's Food Guide*! Learning more about Canada's Food Guide will help you and your family know how much food you need, what types of foods are better for you, and the importance of physical activity in your day.

Canada's Food Guide can help you make wise food choices whether you are eating at home, at school, at work or eating out. Explore tips and ideas on how to use Canada's Food Guide for:

- Planning meals
- Shopping tips
- Reading food labels
- Fast and easy meal ideas
- Smart snacking
- Eating out and
- Counting Food Guide Servings in a meal.

Visit www.hc-sc.gc.ca. Click on "Food and Nutrition". Then click on "Canada's Food Guide".

Plan and provide a variety of healthy foods. Offer colourful vegetables and fruit, grain products, milk and alternatives, and meat and alternatives from Canada's Food Guide.

Offer new foods often. It may take 15 to 20 tries before a child accepts a new food. Allow a child to taste a new food with no pressure to eat any number of bites.

Offer meals and snacks at the same time each day. Children need the routine of regular eating. Children will eat better if they do not nibble on food or drink beverages other than water between meal and snack times.

Make time to eat together. Be good company. Take time to sit down and model healthy eating and talking with children. Enjoy relaxed and social eating with no toys, TV or phone calls

Help children build healthy eating habits. Help infants and toddlers move from foods that are smooth to foods that are more difficult to chew. Use child-sized plates, bowls, spoons and forks and child-friendly dishes to help children learn to serve themselves.

Let a child's hunger and fullness cues guide you. Appetites vary from day to day so offer small amounts and allow children to ask for more. Try not to play games or force children to eat.

Involve children in cooking and gardening. Children who help to choose, prepare and grow food are more likely to eat well. Books, rhymes, songs and play activities can increase children's awareness of food and interest in healthy eating.

From LEAP BC Food FLAIR at www.2010LegaciesNow.com

For more information on nutrition and healthy eating, contact your local Health Unit.

Visit our web site at

www.communitiesforkids.ca

Comments or questions? Contact communitiesforkids@telus.net or call 250-496-5511.
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