



HASTINGS PRINCE EDWARD
Public Health

Eating Together as a Family

Mealtime is a chance for families to connect, share stories and enjoy food with each other.

Making time in your busy schedule for family meals is worth it!



Teens who eat meals with their parents have been shown to do better in school and are less likely to abuse drugs and alcohol.

Create Positive Family Meals:

- Provide structure – schedule regular meals and snacks and avoid grazing because it spoils appetites.
- Offer a pleasant setting – eliminate distractions while eating (no TV, texting, etc.).
- Keep conversations light – use this time to bond with your children.
- Give control – allow everyone to decide how much they eat. Let them pick and choose from the healthy foods you have provided on the table.
- Avoid nagging or bribing – it creates negative experiences and can lead to unhealthy eating behaviours.

Teachable Moments:

Children and teens learn by watching their parents. Use family meals to provide some life lessons.

- Use Canada's Food Guide to plan meals and talk about the importance of healthy eating.
- Involve everyone in grocery shopping. Discuss the variety of foods available and how to make good choices.
- Develop a taste for adventure by serving new and unusual foods from time to time.
- Have kids and teens help out in the kitchen and teach food preparation skills.
- Teach table manners and expect good behaviour during meals.
- Be a positive role model and enjoy healthy foods yourself! Your children will pick up on your thoughts and feelings about food.

Take This Family Meal Challenge!

For one month, eat dinner every night with your family. Aim for each meal to last at least 30 minutes. It may seem awkward at first but don't give up! At the end of the month ask everyone if they enjoyed eating meals together. Ask yourself "did it have a positive impact on my family?" Bet it will!



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