

## HELPFUL TIPS IF TIME IS AN ISSUE

- Bring home healthy pre-made foods; roasted chicken, pre-cut salad, whole wheat dinner rolls, and/or fresh fruit.
- If you make your meal at home, make enough to have leftovers the next day.
- Don't limit the family meal to dinner, breakfast works too.
- If you eat out, find a "kid friendly" restaurant; try to sit where it is quiet, and choose healthy foods.
- Picnics at the baseball field or dinner in the lunch room at work can be great places for family meals.



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## FAMILY MEALTIME: TAKE A NEW LOOK



Program for Families with  
Young Children



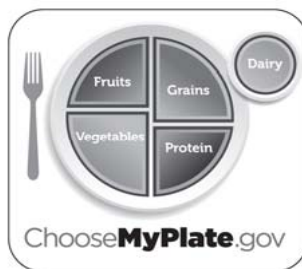
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## IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY MEALTIME

How many times a week do you and your family share a meal? Did you know family meals have shown to benefit the growth and future habits of your children?

With the fast pace of today, family mealtimes are being replaced by eating on the run and the “drive-thru”. However, it is still possible to make time for a family meal.

The first 5 years of a child’s life are vital stages of growth. The way we feed our children will effect them now and for the rest of their lives. The family meal is a great way to support the healthy growth of children.



## WHAT DO CHILDREN GET OUT OF IT?

- They eat a wider variety of more nutritious foods.
- They are more likely to eat enough fruits and vegetables.
- They learn good eating habits.
- They learn table manners, cooperation, and other good behaviors from adults.
- They learn about food safety, such as the importance of hand washing before eating.
- They learn verbal skills and have a broader vocabulary.
- They gain a better sense of safety and belonging within the family.
- They learn how to make meals.

## A SIMPLE GUIDE FOR THE FAMILY MEAL:

- Plan days and times of meals in advance with all family members.
- Share in meal tasks, even small children can help with small jobs.
- Offer a variety of nutritious foods and try new things.
- Turn off TV’s, radios, and let the answering machine pick up the phone.
- Talk about positive topics at the table.
- Have meals last at least 20-30 min. It helps adults not to overeat and it allows young children to finish without being rushed.
- Be patient with young children; they are still learning how to eat and can be messy.
- Be a good role model for children. If they see you doing it, they will do it too.

