



1

What is a family meal? Ideas and tips for eating together

A family meal can be the most enjoyable moment of the day, where good food and laughter is shared amongst a family. This might include immediate and extended family members and friends within a supportive and loving environment.

1. A family meal is shared in an environment that is:

- Loving
- Open
- Safe

2. Have regular routines for your family mealtime, such as:

- Decide on a set time and place where the family eats every day
- Have set seats at the table
- Turn the television/music/phones off during mealtimes
- Have everyone at the table share a story eg the best part of their day

3. A family meal involves the whole process of the meal. This includes:

- shopping
- growing and using produce from your own garden
- preparation
- cooking
- eating
 - Try to involve all family members, regardless of age, including children in the preparing, cooking and serving processes for mealtimes
 - Even though it can take time, when possible prepare a variety of fresh foods
 - Involving other family members in the process will give them a chance to learn about the ingredients and understand cooking

- Involve the whole family, including children, in deciding the weekly menu or a favourite meal for the week

4. Add spice and variety to your family meals:

- A family meal can be any time of the day – breakfast, lunch or dinner
- Be open to trying new foods, even if you don't like them yourself
- Present foods in different ways through a variety of dishes eg stir frying instead of steaming vegetables
- Provide opportunities for food exploration eg try a dish from another country

5. Expose the children to different family meal environments:

- With the grandparents and extended family
- With groups of friends
- Have regular family meal outings. Try a picnic in the park or a meal at a local restaurant
- Become involved in family cooking days at your local community centre

Preparing and sharing an enjoyable healthy meal together can help your family to be healthy and happy.

For recipes go to:

<http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/national/recipes>

Acknowledgements: Nutrition Australia Qld would like to thank Katie Mellish, Accredited Practising Dietitian, for her contribution to this fact sheet

Nutrition Australia Qld

6/100 Campbell St Bowen Hills QLD 4006 | Phone: (07) 3257 4393 | Fax: (07) 3257 4616 | ABN: 33 986 781 351
www.nutritionaustralia.org

