Benefits Of Family Dinners!

Most of us have heard at one time or another that we should eat meals together as a family. But why? Here are some reasons I’ve found related to age of the children...

Ages 1 - 5
- Conversation at the dinner table is even better than reading to children in boosting their vocabulary, and teaching them to read.
- Kids who start eating dinners now are less likely to be overweight later.
- New parents who develop a dinnertime ritual feel more satisfied with their marriages.

Ages 6 – 12
- There is a strong link between family dinners and academic performance, even stronger than doing homework, sports or art.
- The family has an increased intake of fruits, vegetables and micronutrients, and fewer fried foods, trans-fats and sodas.
- Children feel more connected to siblings and parents.

Ages 13 -18
- Teens that eat regular family dinners are more likely to get A’s in school.
- Family dinners reduce the high risk teenage behaviors like smoking, substance abuse, eating disorders, teenage pregnancy and violence.
- Reduces depression and anxiety and increases self-esteem.
- It’s an opportunity to check in with the kids and find out how they are doing.
Starting a Family Dinner Routine

www.thefamilydinnerproject.org

During the summer, many families change their dinnertime habits — meals might become more casual, the schedule might be looser and the rules and expectations that govern school year dinners might relax a little bit. But as you plan for the back-to-school season, you’re probably mindful that family dinner needs to find its place among all the other items crowding the calendar. Here’s how to start — or resume — a school year family dinner routine that works for everyone.

1: Remember why family meals are important to you…
Why is it important to keep family dinner on your to-do list? Maybe it’s the research that shows there are many social, emotional and physical benefits to having dinner together. Maybe it’s that your family doesn’t have many chances to gather beyond dinnertime. Maybe it’s a chance for you to work on healthier eating habits together, or something else totally unique to your family. Whatever it is, try to keep your reasons for family dinner in focus, and make sure to share them with everyone in your household so you all understand why dinnertime is a priority.

2: Agree on the ground rules…
Every family will have somewhat different rules surrounding dinner, and that’s okay! Your mealtime doesn’t have to look like your neighbor’s. Especially with older children and teens, having a family discussion about what the expectations will be can make mealtimes more pleasant and positive. Big picture areas to discuss include:

➢ Where will we eat? Is it okay to eat in front of the TV, or not? If so, how often? If not, why not?
➢ How will we manage technology at the table? Are phones and tablets allowed? If so, what level of use is okay? If not, why not?
➢ Are there conversational rules we want to follow as a family, such as no interrupting, staying positive, or taking turns choosing topics?
➢ How should family members react when there’s a food they don’t enjoy? Is there an alternative available, or not?
➢ What jobs can each family member do to help make mealtimes happen?

3. Set a schedule…
It may not be every night and it may not even be dinner — remember to think of alternatives like family breakfasts, late-evening snacks, walking desserts and weekend lunches to gather everyone for food, fun and conversation on a schedule that works for you. But make the commitment and set the dates. It takes time to develop a habit you can stick to, so plan for success!
HEALTHCARE CONSUMER SMARTS

Practice prevention and self-care. By getting the age-appropriate health screenings and immunizations, you are taking a proactive approach to prevent potential conditions. In addition, by knowing what you can do at home to help minimize the symptoms of a cold or flu, you can prevent unnecessary trips to the doctor’s office. Self-care hand books are a great resource to have on hand, as well as quick access to their online counterpart.

Foods From A to Z – “Z” Foods

Zander – Freshwater fish native to Europe. This large fish can reach up to 47 inches long and 44 pounds. It is most commonly used in fillets, sushi and sashimi. Very high in lean protein and omega 3’s and low in calories.

Zinfandel Grape – this black skinned wine grape is native to Croatia and found its way to the United States in the mid 19th century. More than 10% of the wine grapes grown in California are Zinfandel’s. This grape is high in Vitamin C, Potassium, and Copper. The high sugar content is what makes this one of the top wine grapes in the world.

Zucchini – like all squash, has it’s ancestry in the America’s, however the variety typically known as zucchini was developed in Northern Italy. Zucchini is an excellent source of fiber, protein, Vitamins A, C & B6, Folate, Iron, Magnesium, Potassium, Phosphorous, Zinc, Copper and Manganese.

Food Smarts

Police your portions – Does your steak take up more than half your plate? Think about cutting your serving of beef in half. That's because it's best to try and fill half your plate with veggies or a mixture of veggies and fresh fruit, says Newgent, so that it's harder to overdo it on the more caloric dishes (like cheesy potatoes or barbecue sauce—slathered ribs—yum!).

Safety Smarts

Pedestrian Safety

Tips - Cross at corners and intersections. Use marked crosswalks where available - Be visible at night and in inclement weather - Watch out for vehicles turning right on red - Use sidewalks or walk facing traffic where there are no sidewalks
Recipe of the Month

Quinoa Salad

1 c. Quinoa
Kernals from 2 ears of corn, cooked & cut off cob
1 (15oz) can black beans, drained and rinsed
1 Red or green pepper, cubed
2 Scallions, washed and chopped
½ c. Parsley or cilantro, washed and chopped
1 mango/peach/nectarine, peeled & chopped
Salt/pepper to taste
Juice from ½ lemon or lime
2 Tbls Light Italian Dressing

Cook quinoa in 2 c. water (about 15 minutes). Let quinoa cool then mix in all other ingredients. Serve cold or at room temperature.

September Birthdays

Sept 6 – Bibiana Diaz
Sept 14 – Dolores Viramontez
Sept 20 – Beth Arridell
Sept 22 – Teresa Vera

Happy Birthday

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September

Childhood Cancer Awareness Month
www.curesearch.org

Fruit & Veggies More Matters Month
www.PBHFoundation.org

National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month
www.coam-month.org

Newborn Screening Awareness Month
www.savebabies.org

Run/Walk Events

Wascally Wabbit Half Marathon
Sept 23 ~ Woodward Park
http://thewascally.com/

Shaver Lake Triathlon
Sept 30 ~ Shaver Lake
http://www.sierracascades.com

Komen Central Valley Race for the Cure
Oct 1 ~ Chuckchansi Park
http://www.info-komen.org

Fowler Fall Festival Fun Run
Oct 7 ~ Fowler Panzak Park
https://runsignup.com/Race/CA/Fowler/FowlerFallFestivalFunRunWalk

Monster Mash Halloween Run
Oct 28 ~ Woodward Park
http://runsignup.com/Race/CA/Fresno/MonsterMashDashHalloweenRun

Two Cities Marathon
Nov 5 ~ Woodward Park
http://www.twocitiesmarathon.com

San Joaquin River Trail Run
Nov 18 ~ Milerton Lake/San Joaquin River

Fresno Turkey Trot
Nov 23 ~ Woodward Park
https://runsignup.com/Race/CA/Fresno/SierraChallengeExpressTurkeyTrot