

NUTRITION MONTH: The family that eats together, eats well together

Did you know that when parents and children eat together at least 3 days per week, children do better in school and have fewer behavior problems. Family meals are healthier and more nutritious and help improve communication between children and adults.

If you're like most families, you're caught in a time crunch between work, school, soccer practice, laundry, and no time left for a leisurely dinner. But whether your family is small or large, eating together is important for children from preschool through high school. Have heart, dinner doesn't have to be fancy or perfect, it just has to be there.

If you do not eat together regularly, start with just one meal a week and add more later. Children may complain at first, but if meals are pleasant, your kids will start to enjoy the time together. Try these tips, to help you get started towards eating together and eating better.

- Have everyone take turns requesting a favorite meal.
- Get the kids to help grate the cheese, set the table or do the dishes.
- Turn on some music, to help the cooking and cleaning go by faster.
- Keep small snacks handy to hold everyone until dinner. Try fruit, vegetables, or a glass of milk.
- Reduce distractions during mealtime: leave the phone and turn off the TV.
- Cook it quick, but eat it slow. Allow ample time to enjoy the meal and talk with each other.
- Keep conversations pleasant, save arguments for later. Give everyone time to talk and listen to each other.

Eat Together, Eat Better is a program developed by the Nutrition Education Network of Washington State University and US Dept. of Agriculture Food & Nutrition Services.

Eating right can be easy! Cristina Sutter is a Registered Dietitian with a Masters degree in Nutrition. She is available for nutrition counseling at Satori Integrative Health Centre www.satoriintegrativehealth.com. Reach her today by calling 604.274.7224 or by email at cristina.sutter@gmail.com.