



A Recipe for Family Meal Times

Learning how to cook helps kids develop healthy eating habits, increases self-confidence and teaches life skills. Eating meals as a family can lead to healthier choices, cost savings and a chance to spend time together. Try some of these tips for cooking and eating together:

Plan Together: Planning ahead may decrease costs and makes shopping and preparing much easier. Give everyone a chance to choose some recipes. You can even create a family recipe binder.

Go to <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/nutrition/Page5620.aspx> and look for Weekly Menu Planner and the Healthy Grocery List.

Prepare Together: Keep things simple so the whole family can help.

Younger kids can:

- gather ingredients
- measure ingredients
- stir ingredients together
- wash vegetables and fruit

Older kids can:

- peel and chop vegetables and fruit
- grate cheese
- open canned items
- help bake, broil or sauté, with supervision



Create Together: Create-it-yourself meals are a great idea for family meals. Try do-it-yourself, tortilla, pizza, omelet or leftover nights. Everyone can help prepare the ingredients and customize their own meal. This way everyone can enjoy their own version of a family favorite. Having ingredients prepared in advance can make this a quick meal preparation night.

Eat together: Eating meals you prepare together improves a family's eating habits and can help develop a sense of belonging. Eating together may mean being flexible with when and where you eat, but it is well worth the effort. Avoid electronics and phones during meal times and focus on enjoying the meal and conversation time.

Clean up together: Get everyone involved in clean up. This is also a great time to prepare school lunches and teach children how to build simple and healthy meals.

Cooking with kids can be fun and easy. If you get your kids cooking now, chances are they will continue this habit when they are older.

For more information on Healthy Eating, visit:

<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/nutrition/Page2914.aspx>