



family meals matter

A regular family meal brings a thread of cohesiveness in our fast-paced society.

On average, families eat their evening meal together on just three nights each week. And one-in-five families eats their dinner in front of a television set every night, according to Newspoll research conducted in Australia.

why family meals matter

With the rising tide of obesity, type-2 diabetes and other chronic conditions now presenting in childhood, well-prepared, healthful family meals matter more than ever. Obese children have a 25-50 per cent chance of becoming obese adults, and this can increase to about 80 per cent for obese adolescents!

benefits of eating together

Children or teenagers who eat dinner regularly with their families:

- ▶ Do better in school and are less likely to smoke, drink or use drugs;
- ▶ Have a better vocabulary (applies to younger children), due to exposure to adult conversation;
- ▶ Eat more nutritious food, such as fruits, vegetables, grains and calci-

um-rich foods and have fewer soft drinks;

- ▶ Make healthier food choices when eating out with their peers;
- ▶ Are more likely to eat breakfast, even when a parent is not directing them.

7 things to help your family

1. Switch off the TV at mealtimes
2. Eat meals with your children regularly
3. Provide nutritious food
4. Set a good example—kids copy behaviour
5. Get the whole family involved in meal preparation
6. Make time for breakfast
7. Offer water to quench thirst—limit fruit juice to half a cup daily and encourage whole fruit.

See **page 44** for healthful, family-friendly food that you can make—and eat—at home!

For professional advice on planning family meals, consult an Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) in Australia or Registered Dietitian in New Zealand.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For further information on healthy eating, please contact Sanitarium Nutrition Service

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