



Getting Started on Family Meals

A family meal is two or more people eating together. Whether a family is small or large eating together is important for children from preschool through high school.

Family Meal Decisions

If you are not eating together now, start with one meal a week and add more as you can. The goal is to eat together 3 or more times a week. Families usually enjoy family meals after they try them for a while.

Talk about how to set up your family mealtime:

- What time is best?
- What to talk about?
- What not to talk about?
- What behavior is OK, what is not?

After the discussion, parents have the final decision about:

- Making family meals a priority. Parents tell children that eating together is important and something that they will do as a family.
- “Rules” to keep conversations pleasant.
- When and what food to serve.
- Setting the time to eat.

The Food

Family meals do not have to be either hot or fancy to be healthy and satisfying. Simple foods will do. Tuna sandwiches, an apple or salad and yogurt can be a quick and healthy meal.

If time for meals is a problem, try some ideas for fast meals:

- Make a list of foods that cook quickly and save time: scrambled eggs, fruit and toast; sandwiches, carrot sticks, and milk; stir-fry meat and vegetables.
- Keep ingredients on hand for 2-3 quick, favorite recipes.
- Cook a large amount once a week or once a month. Refrigerate or freeze food for another meal.
- Check cupboards for foods you have on hand. Write down one or two menus using those foods.
- Ask everyone to help prepare food and get the meal ready.

Skillet Meal

(Makes 4 to 6 servings)

1. Choose one food from each box. Combine all ingredients in a large skillet. Add a small amount of salt, pepper, chili powder, onion or garlic powder or curry for flavor.
2. Bring to a boil.
3. Turn heat to low. Cover pan and simmer 30 minutes until pasta or rice is tender. This is about 15 minutes for the pasta and 30 minutes for the rice.

<p>½ to 1 pound or 1 ½ cups cooked meat, fish chicken or beans: cooked ground beef or turkey cooked Chicken or turkey, cut –up ham cubes tuna or other fish cooked pinto, kidney or black beans</p>	<p>1 ½ to 2 cups vegetables: carrots peas green beans broccoli celery green or red pepper Mixed vegetables</p>	<p>Pasta, Rice or Noodles Use uncooked: 1 cup macaroni 1 cup spaghetti 1 cup noodles ³/₄ cup rice</p>	<p>Sauce Use 1 can of cream soup, tomato soup OR onion soup AND either 1 ½ cans water OR 1 ½ cans milk</p> <p>2 cups canned spaghetti sauce</p> <p>2 cups chicken broth</p>	<p>Flavoring: Salt pepper cheese soy sauce barbecue sauce catsup mustard</p>
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Favorite Combinations for Skillet Meals

Chili Mac				
½ pound ground beef, browned Or 1 can red beans, drained	1 can drained green beans 1 grated carrot	1 cup macaroni	1 can tomato sauce plus 1 can water,	1 tablespoon chili powder
Chicken-Broccoli				
1 cup leftover chicken	1 ½ cups green beans or broccoli pieces	³ / ₄ cup rice	1 can cream of mushroom soup plus 1 ½ cans water	
Tuna-Noodle Casserole				
1 can tuna, drained	1 cup mixed vegetables or green peas	1 cup raw noodles	1 can cream mushroom soup plus 1 ½ cups water	