Family Mealtime
Work, homework, errands, music lessons, baseball practice, part-time jobs ~ our daily routines can be a handful to juggle! Such activities may often pull family members apart. However, if everyone can gather for mealtime regularly throughout the week ~ whether it is for breakfast, lunch or dinner ~ at home or at a restaurant ~ the moments around the dining table can help to bring family members back together and strengthen family bonds.

Mealtime is so much more than just eating together. Consider all of the following potential benefits and how it can impact you and your loved ones.

### Communication
- Learn what great things your family members are doing at school or work.
- Share funny stories.
- Talk about current events.
- Discuss upcoming family events and schedules.
- Reminisce about family past-times or family history.
- Connect with each other ~ help children feel comfortable talking with parents about important issues as they grow up.

### Learning
- Converse with children ~ expose them to a variety of words and help develop their communication skills.
- Discuss characteristics of foods like shape, texture, taste, or where it comes from and how it is made.
- Teach proper table manners.
- Engage and teach children to shop for food, prepare meals, set the table, help clean up ~ such life skills will help them succeed as they grow up.

### Healthy eating habits
- Regular meals and snacks can help to satisfy appetites, provide security while helping everyone to develop healthy habits.
- Children learn from watching you. Eat fruits and veggies and your children will too.

### Family meals can be rewarding
- Unwind and relax with loved ones after a long, busy and exhausting day at work and school.
- Keep everyone happy ~ parents and children alike, look forward to spending time together. Use mealtimes as a way to stay connected to each other.
- Pass down family traditions, like special mealtimes, to your kids and future generations.

Our fast-paced life will make it an ongoing challenge to have regular family meals. But with some dedication and implementation of strategic meal planning techniques, it can be a challenge that you and your family can overcome.

Cook, eat and talk together. Make mealtime a family time.

Explore the Nutrition Education for Wellness (NEW) website for information to help you meal plan, budget, and prepare simple healthy recipes: www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/new

---

