

# Sharing Food, Creating Fun

Sharing food together is a great way to connect with your family. Being busy and not having much time can make this hard to do.



*“When we eat together it gives us time to share how our day went and it makes us closer.”*

**Nicole, 17 years old**

## Children who eat a meal or a snack with other family members at least once a day:



- Develop a sense of belonging, feel more secure and stable
  - Have an easier time talking with their parents
  - Have fewer behaviour problems
  - Do better at school
  - Have higher self esteem
  - Learn more words (have a better vocabulary)
- Try and enjoy a greater variety of foods
  - Eat more fruits and vegetables and less fried foods
  - Are less likely to smoke, use drugs, drink alcohol, be depressed or have disordered eating

## Parents who eat with their families:

- Eat healthier
- Save money
- Strengthen family ties
- Role model healthy eating for their children
- Can share family values, traditions and culture
- Can connect with their children and find out what’s going on in their lives



## Raising a Healthy Eater

- Parents decide what, when and where to eat
- Children decide how much and if they will eat

## Tips for Sharing Fun Family Meals



- Make the same meal for everyone
  - Plan a weekly menu with the family and put it on the fridge; have each family member choose one meal or snack they would like to have each week
  - Use your weekly menu to make a shopping list
  - Let children help with the grocery shopping and cooking, not just the clean up
  - Keep meals simple – when pressed for time, make sandwiches, reheat leftovers, buy bagged salads or pre-chopped veggies or roasted chicken
- Turn off the TV, computer and cell phones
  - Take phone calls later
  - Schedule family meals into your calendars
  - Allow children to eat slowly or fast, eat just one or many different foods. Let them have more of any food.
  - Share your table manners
  - Keep conversation pleasant and make sure everyone gets to speak and be heard
  - Keep mealtimes fun



### Keep a jar filled with things to talk about at the table. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- The best part of your day
- Ideas for family activities
- The 3 favourite things about your best friend
- If you had one wish, what would it be?
- Share something you did that made someone else feel good
- Tell jokes or share a funny story

### For more information:

[www.bettertogetherbc.ca](http://www.bettertogetherbc.ca)

Contact Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC; call 8-1-1 to speak to a dietitian or go to [www.healthlinkbc.ca/dietitian](http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/dietitian) to email your question. Translation services are available in 130 languages.

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