



Take the quiz! We have meals together

- a. I can't remember the last time we all ate together
- b. Once a week
- c. Once a day

Our mornings are

- a. Always running late, just getting the kids out of bed takes a long time
- b. Sometimes we do OK, but not always
- c. We get up, have breakfast and get off to school in time

Our evenings are

- a. Easy, the kids eat when they want and go to bed when they get tired
- b. I don't know how to fit it all in—meals, homework, showers
- c. We have a set routine that makes it manageable

The results are in!

If you answered mostly A's...

You may feel like you just want to run away, but don't give up - establishing routines can make a big difference. Pick a time of day that is most hectic for your family and follow the tips below to make it more manageable. Start with small steps and soon you will see big results!

If you answered mostly B's....

You're headed in the right direction. You try to get everyone moving together but it doesn't always work. You know that having a routine for your family can make life easier, but it can be hard to keep everyone on the same schedule. The tips below will help you set and keep a routine that is flexible enough for everyone to follow

If you answered mostly C's...

Congratulations! You know that having a routine really helps your family time be manageable and enjoyable. When everyone is on the same routine it helps your family have time together that is relaxing and fun.

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Tips for Making a Routine:

- Pick a time of day you want to improve (bedtime, getting off to school, dinner and homework time)
- Write down all the things that need to get done at that time
- Get feedback from family members on what they can do to get the list done
- List what each family member will do and when they will do it -Make a complete schedule with the time listed for each task
- Post the schedule with the assignments where it can be seen by everyone
- Be flexible - remember not every day is going to go exactly as planned
- The goal is to have a routine that everyone feels a part of



A sample schedule:

- Kids get up and make bed between 6:30 - 6:45
- Kids get dressed between 6:45 - 7:00
- Dad puts out cereal, milk and fruit by 7:00
- Everybody eats breakfast between 7:00 - 7:20
- Everyone brush their teeth by 7:30
- Mom makes sure everyone has everything they need and get off to school and work by 7:30



School Connections

Lesson Connection

In Lesson 4, *Serving Sizes*, your child's class explored the difference between a portion (a subjective amount) and a serving size (a standard amount). They also learned about different types of measurement instruments used for food: cups, tablespoons, teaspoons, grams and ounces. In the school garden, the students discovered how many servings of vegetables a whole vegetable would yield, and predicted how many servings of vegetables are growing in the garden.

Family Activity

Using common household items to estimate an amount of food can be helpful. The focus of this activity is to figure out which of these familiar objects looks about the same as a serving size. Draw a line between the serving size and the object. Try letting your child find the answers first, and then work together if your child isn't sure.

3 dominoes



Your fist



A deck of cards



1 small apple
1 tablespoon of peanut butter
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces of cheese
1 cup of salad
3 ounces of meat
1 teaspoon of butter



Your thumb



A baseball



One dice



~~Don't~~ Talk Back to Me!

Most kids talk nonstop when they are little but once they get to elementary school, many of them clam up with their parents. But there are some tips to get your kids to talk with you, and the more you get used to using them, the more natural it will be.

- Pay attention to the little conversation openers your kids offer, and drop everything to respond. It can be hard to tear yourself away from what you're doing to focus on a child's question, but how you respond is important. To him, it's an indication of whether he can count on you to talk when he needs you. And it's more important than any conversation you try to start, like when you try to get him to tell you what happened at school today.

- Ask questions that require real answers instead of just yes or no. "What was the best thing about school today?," "Do the kids at school ever talk about boyfriends and girlfriends?," "Who did you sit with at lunch today?" or "How did the soccer game go at recess?" will get you a lot further than "How was school today?"

- Don't jump in with solutions and advice. Your child needs a chance to vent, and he can't hear suggestions until he does. Then he needs a chance to figure out his own solutions, which is how he develops confidence and competence. If you jump in with solutions, you make him feel incompetent. This is hard – we always want to help our kids do the "right thing".

- Make sure you connect with your child every day- family meal time can be the perfect opportunity for you to chat about anything from their day at school to the coming weekend to a TV show you just watched together.

- LISTEN. This is the most important part of helping kids open up. Don't talk, listen. Echo back what they're saying so they know you understand, and then be quiet so they can talk more. If they don't keep talking, you can ask another question, but keep your tone companionable, not interrogatory.

Whatever the approach, getting your family to talk is important to their development and to your relationships. Even if your kids don't respond to you - remember the important part is showing your interest in them.





So happy together

How to create a happy family meal

- Turn off TV and phones
 - Talk about positive topics, save discipline for another time
 - Try to keep mealtime relaxed
- Eat dinner early enough for everyone to be at their best and not "starving"
- Even if you and your child cannot eat at the same time, having a parent at the same table while your child is eating helps make the meal better for your child.

Check it Out

-Make a schedule as a family for one routine in your day.

-Take five minutes each day this week to have a one on one conversation with each of your children.

-Turn off or mute all electronic devices during your family meal time.

-Be flexible with making new schedules and give yourself time to make changes.

Healthy Family Challenge:

Have at least one family meal this week where everyone is at the same table together and enjoying each other's company!

Let's do dinner

Families are busy these days so it can be hard to find time to spend together and really talk. Your children need you more than ever. They are becoming more independent, yet still need your guidance, love and support. In fact, studies shows kids get big-time benefits from daily meals with their family.

Tweens who sit down and eat with their family five times a week are less likely to report tension with family members and are more likely to believe their parents are proud of them.

Kids with regular family meals are also more likely to have higher self-esteem, interact better with their peers, and show greater resilience in the face of adversity.

Meals are a great time to connect as a family. But how do you make that happen with hectic schedules?

- Use a family calendar on the wall or internet and schedule family meals to work with everyone's schedule.
- Mark these times with a special sticker or circle with a colorful marker.
- Keep it simple, use a slow cooker or one pot meal that keeps prep time to a minimum.
- Combine homemade items with those that are prepared, like salads in bags, canned fruit, pasta/veggie combinations.
- Plan your meals ahead of time to make sure they are healthy and well-balanced. It saves time, money, and eases the stress that may often accompany preparing meals.
- Family meals do not have to be dinner - choose Sunday brunch, Saturday lunch or any meal that works for you and your family.
- Try this easy 5-minute meal, 3-Can Chili: <http://ow.ly/dXhLE> For more meal ideas for busy families check out www.MealsMatter.org



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