

# LET'S EAT HEALTHY!

## Belmont County WIC Newsletter

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### Children Benefit from Family Meals

Mealtime is a very important time in a child's life. Recent studies have shown that mealtime improves children's health, food habits, behaviors, social cues, and school activities.

Children ages 2-5 have shown improved reading levels, are more focused during the school day, and show to have better report cards than children who do not engage in family mealtime.

Eating with parents and caregivers allows children to try many different fruits, vegetables, and meats. Mealtime can help children learn the right portion sizes to eat for a healthy growth.

Mealtime shapes children's social cues and behaviors, as they grow older. Family meals help kids feel safe and close to their parents.

From: Kansas State University research and extension group:

<https://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/mf2784.pdf>



**Department of Health**

Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC)

### Everyone to the Table

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### Enjoy your family at mealtimes

Forget about the stress of the day. Turn off the television. Don't text or talk on the phone. Put your cell phone away from the table.

Sit with your children. Sit together at a table or counter. Look into your child's eyes when you talk to each other.

Talk to your children. Listen to your children. Talk about what you did during the day. Ask your child what he did, who he played

with. "What is the most interesting thing that happened to you today?"

Family meals filled with laughter and love will create happy memories that last a lifetime!

Start family style meals when your child is young. Let your child serve food onto his/her own plate. Let your child decide how much he/she will eat. They will learn to choose the amount of food he/she needs to eat. They will also be more willing to try new foods. Family meals are times for your child to grow and learn how to make some decisions on their own.

From: kidfood "Healthy eating for today's kids".

### Eat together

#### Keep it simple!

Meals do not need to be fancy. Sandwiches, soups and salads make quick and easy meals.

#### Start slow.

If your family is not used to eating together, start by planning 1 to 2 family meals in a week. Gradually increase until you have at least 1 family meal every day.

#### Ignore family protests.

Ask everyone in your family to eat together.

### **Shop and cook together.**

Cooking will be quick. Children like to eat what they help to cook.

### **Start family meals when your children are young.**

It will become a habit for them. Family meals will make those later teenage years easy. Your teenager will be used to eating together and sharing their life stories.

### **Create special family meals.**

Make quesadillas or tacos together. Serve breads, deli meats, cheese slices, raw vegetables on a platter for a 'sandwich buffet'. Cook spaghetti and homemade meatballs. Bake a pizza casserole!

### **All Moms are Models!**

Parents of infants and young children have a powerful role in shaping their child's experience around food. Parents and caregivers are the ones choosing and bringing in all the food for the family to each, selecting the family's diet.

You may not think it, but when you make your plate to eat, children are modeling your food habits. Children learn by observing, so it is important to fill your plate with the correct portion sizes of many fruits, vegetables, and lean proteins.

Never force your child to eat a certain food if they do not like it.

Rather, take it away and re-introduce it in a different way at another meal and time. This is the most effective way to get children to become familiar with foods. Sometimes it can take 10-16 tries before a child decides to like a certain food because their taste buds are still developing.

Retrieved from the US Nation Library of Medicine:  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2531152/>

### **Soon to be Mothers**

Pregnant mothers should consider getting a flu shot this fall. The flu vaccines will protect both the mother and baby. The Centers for Disease Control ensures that it is a safe vaccine to get during pregnancy.

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/qa/vacpregnant.htm>

### **Infants Matter**

Whether your infant is breastfed or formula fed, they should be present at the table for mealtimes.

Infants are quickly observing their surroundings and begin seeing all of the different foods that will be available to them when they can begin eating solid foods, at around 6 months.

**The holidays are a great time to gather family and continue/start traditions!**



### **Apple Filled Squash (Makes 4 servings)**

Ingredients:

2 acorn, buttercup or butternut squash (If your squash is large, you might use just one to serve 4.)  
2 large apples, peeled, cored and chopped  
2 ½ tablespoons brown sugar  
2 ½ tablespoons melted butter  
½ teaspoon cinnamon  
¼ teaspoon nutmeg  
Dash of ground cloves (or substitute 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice for cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves)

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350.
2. Carefully cut squash in half and remove seeds.
3. Place in baking dish cut side down in about 1 inch of water.
4. Bake for 20 minutes.
5. While squash is cooking, mix apple with other ingredients.
6. Remove squash from oven, turn squash cut side up, and fill with apple mixture.
7. Continue to bake for 20 to 30 minutes, or until tender.

Used with permission from Cornell University Cooperative Extension. Find more recipes at <http://ccetompkins.org/> or <https://fnec.cornell.edu/>



**WIC Supports Breastfeeding  
This institution is an equal  
opportunity provider.**