



# KEYS TO BETTER HEALTH™



## Family Meals Month

September is Family Meals Month, a great time to remember the importance of having meals together as a family. Children who share meals with their families three or more times each week are less likely to be overweight, more likely to eat healthy foods, and less likely to have eating disorders. Regular family meals are also associated with higher grades, higher self-esteem, and less risky behavior.<sup>1</sup> This month, try to add one more family meal to your schedule each week, utilizing the following tips from Choose My Plate.<sup>2</sup>



### Plan your meals

Avoid added stress by taking the time to plan family meals ahead of time. Have the family get involved in planning the meals, and then post the menus in a place where everyone can see it.

### Prepare ahead

Plan and have the ingredients for the week ready ahead of time. Save time by taking extra time on the weekend to prepare meal recipes and freeze or refrigerate to use later in the week. If you are in a time crunch, give yourself permission to purchase pre-prepped ingredients to help streamline the process, such as chopped vegetables or grilled, sliced chicken breasts.

### Make mealtime a priority

Encourage everyone in your household to make family meals a part of their regular schedules. All members of the family should plan on attending and helping with the cooking as well as the cleanup after your meals together. Even the smallest children can help set and clear the table.

### Think beyond dinner

Family meal time does not have to take place at dinner time. If evenings are chaotic for your family, consider having family breakfasts, and/or special weekend lunches together.

### Keep meals fun and focused

Eat around a table and urge everyone to leave cell phones and other electronics in another room, so you can focus on each other and encourage communicate. Make sure to include everyone in the conversation and wait until everyone is finished eating before leaving the table.

#### Sources:

1. Family Meals Retailer Toolkit. FMI website. <https://www.fmi.org/family-meals/toolkits/retailer-toolkit>. Accessed 5.31.18.
2. My Plate, My Wins Tips: Making Family Meals. USDA Choose My Plate website. <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/myplate-mywins-tips-making-family-meals>. Access 6/18/18.

Keys To Better Health™ offers a nutrition shelf-edge labeling program, which makes it easy for you to quickly identify healthy choices regardless of what diet you follow. When you're in our store, be on the lookout for our nutrition tags!

