

Family Meals & Breastfeeding:

The Heart of Good Eating



- 1. Infants who are only fed breast milk the first 6 months have the best start to healthy eating. (1, 2)**
 - Feed your baby only breast milk the first 6 months. Continue to breastfeed 12 months or longer, up to baby's 2nd birthday is best!
 - Breastfeed as long as both mother and baby want.
- 2. Young children fed at the family table have better eating, self-feeding, and language skills. (3, 4)**
 - Offer older babies appropriate foods after 6 months of age to add nutrition of breast milk.
 - Serve older infants and young toddlers nutritious 'best bits' of family meals prepared (mashed, chopped, softened etc) to suit babies' eating abilities.
 - Talk with young children during meals. Use new words to describe foods they are eating.
- 3. Family meals help communication and build relationships. (3, 5, 6, 7)**
 - Mom & Dad or adult family members are role models for children's good eating habits.
 - Children eat better when adults sit down to eat meals with them.
 - Families' cultures are shared when "families' recipes" are developed, prepared and tasted together.
 - Turn off the TV during meals.
 - Cook it quickly, but eat it slowly.
 - Keep conversation light and fun. Talk about the best part the day. Save heavy discussions for another time.
- 4. Family meals help children eat better. (3, 8, 9)**
 - Parents decide what foods to offer.
 - Children decide how much to eat.
 - Serve a variety of foods and encourage small tastes of each new food. New foods can take several tries before accepted as "okay" food.
 - Avoid using foods as reward or punishment.



Resources

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