



Family Mealtime and Mental Health

Enjoying meals as a family can benefit your child's mental health. Studies suggest that children and teens who eat dinner with their family experience fewer emotional and behavioural challenges and greater emotional well-being.¹

Try to reduce distractions and engage children by turning off TV, cell phones, and computers, and asking questions about their day, school, friends, or extra-curricular activities.

Elgar, F.J., Craig, W., & Trites, S.J. (2013). Family dinner, communication, and mental health in Canadian adolescents. *J Adolesc Health*, 52, 433-8
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2012.07.012>.

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★ Tips

All families are different, and for some, busy schedules can make sitting down together for a family dinner difficult. You can achieve the same benefits with these other activities:

- eating a weekend breakfast or lunch as a family,
- going for an evening walk or bike ride as a family, or
- family games or crafts night.

For more information, contact KFL&A Public Health at 613-549-1232 or 1-800-267-7875, ext. 1102.