



Child and Youth Cabinet Newsletter

Focus: Family Meal Campaign

North Penn Family Meal Campaign May 18th through May 23rd!

North Penn Collaborative for Health & Human Services Child & Youth Cabinet has organized a family meal event across many locations throughout the North Penn Region! Take this designated week to "Jump Start" a healthier family life! Look for our quarterly newsletters for ideas and family recipes to enhance your family meals!

Benefits of Family Meals:

You eat.

You talk.

You listen.

You laugh.

You learn.



On April 21, 2009 parents in western Montgomery county were able to get information about how to have successful meal times with their families. Parents recognized the importance of family meal time during an exercise that reflects fond childhood memories. The number one item on their list were family picnics, big family meals and going out to eat. With the economic times really stretching the dollar, parents felt encouraged to use the family mealtime kit to help them make the most of time spent together. All participants pledged to have at least 2 scheduled family meals in the following week, and expressed that the conversation cards would be a great addition to the table. Overall, participants thought the family meal plan would strengthen family talk and time together. To schedule a presentation for your group, please contact Rebecca Villegas-Urban Youth Educator /4-H Development, Penn State Cooperative Extension at 610-489-4315.

Easy Ways to Enjoy Mealtimes Conversations

Family mealtimes really matter - to children and to adults. More positive mealtime experiences mean more family communication, improved performance at school, enhanced reading levels, and healthier weights for children.

Here are five easy ways to enhance the quality of your family's conversations around the table:

Create a relaxed atmosphere. Quality conversations require a calming atmosphere - with minimal distractions. This means turning off the TV and radio news programs; it also means setting aside cell phones (except for emergency calls, of course). Music can be a nice addition - if it is tranquil, peaceful, and played at low volume.

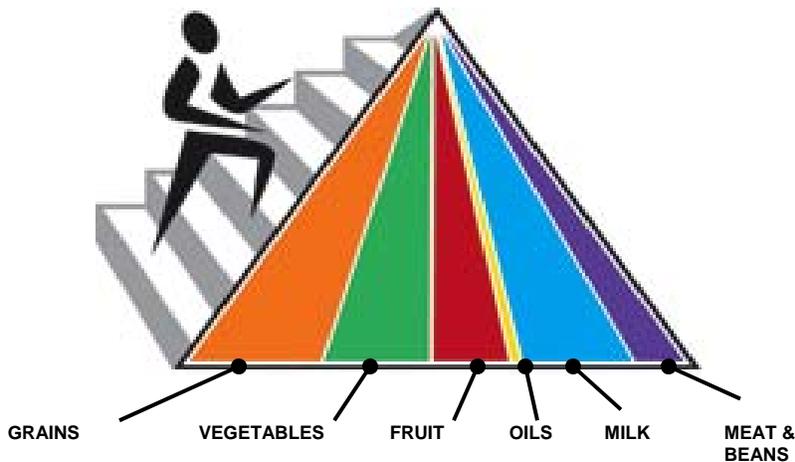
Focus on laughter and learning. Meals are generally not productive times to discuss difficult or stressful issues. They are wonderful times to share funny stories and to learn new views on current events. Make a family commitment to focus only on the positive at the mealtimes. Save disciplinary matters and problems for another time of day.

Respect and involve every family member. Even very small children want to be part of the conversation. Make a conscious effort to engage everyone at the table. Be patient with those who take longer to express a thought - and actively seek out the opinions of those who tend to be quieter. Sometimes it helps to go around the table person-by-person.

Enjoy different viewpoints. Promoting positive conversations doesn't mean that everyone has to agree on everything. Establish a few ground rules - like no teasing, criticizing, rude comments about other people, or talking while someone else is talking. Listen thoughtfully to each other - and help children learn to appreciate differences.

References: <http://www.eatrightmontana.org/PDF/2007HealthyFamiliesAPRIL.pdf>

MyPyramid.gov



MyPyramid Family Meal Menu:

The warm summer days bring a great opportunity to head outside and enjoy a picnic with family and friends. Take your family meal outside this summer! Pack your cooler and enjoy these healthy summertime recipes with your family:

(Recipes from CDC Fruits & Veggies - More Matters www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov)

Asian Salad (Serves 4)

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups cooked chicken, cut into bite sized pieces | 1 (10 ounce) bag shredded cabbage |
| 1 cup sliced mushrooms | 2 shredded carrots |
| 2 Tablespoons chopped cilantro | 1 thinly sliced cucumber |
| 3 thinly sliced green onions | 1 tangerine, divided into sections |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ cup non-fat Asian or Oriental style salad dressing | Black pepper to taste |

In a large bowl, combine chicken, cabbage, mushrooms, carrot, cilantro, cucumber and dressing. Toss well. Top with green onions and tangerine sections.

Calories 220, Total Fat 7g, Saturated Fat 2g, Cholesterol 70mg, Sodium 367mg

Watermelon Blueberry Banana Split (Serves 4)

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 2 large bananas | $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vanilla low-fat yogurt |
| 8 "scoops" watermelon | 2 cups fresh blueberries |
| $\frac{1}{4}$ cup crunchy cereal nuggets (such as granola, cheerios, etc.) | |

Peel bananas and cut in half crosswise, then cut each piece in half lengthwise. For each serving lay 2 banana pieces against the sides of a shallow dish. Place a watermelon "scoop" at each end of the dish. Fill the center space with the blueberries. Stir yogurt until smooth. Spoon over the watermelon "scoops". Sprinkle with cereal nuggets.

Calories 186, Total Fat 1g, Cholesterol 1mg, Sodium 66mg