**Cooking and eating together are great ways to connect as a family and to learn life skills.**

**Cooking together can:**

**Cook and Eat - Together**

* help children learn math, spelling, reading, science and health
* help kids learn to enjoy a variety of foods
* help adults model healthy eating habits for children
* happen at home, at school or during after school activities
* be a chance to learn together. Check for cooking classes at your local community centre, community college or a local grocery store.

**Eating together can:**

* help families and friends to learn and listen to each other
* help preschoolers to learn more words
* help teens do better in school and avoid risky activities such as smoking, using drugs or alcohol
* help adults and children to have better eating habits
* be possible but needs to be a priority.

**Making it happen**

* Plan meals ahead: It is important to make a plan. If you leave it to chance, family meals will be hard to make happen regularly.
* Fit family meals in: Look at the activities for the week and as a family make a plan of action for how you will organize meals around the schedule. Once you have figured out what works best for your family’s schedule, you can make an actual plan.
* Start small: Don’t plan too many meals at once – small changes are easier. Start with 3 or 4 meals and give the family a few nights for leftovers or a meal out.
* Keep it easy. Change can be hard to maintain particularly when life gets busy. There is no need for fancy meals. Grilled cheese sandwiches and salad is a great dinner on a rushed night.

For more information about family meals or for quick recipes go to [www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca) or [www.canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/tips-healthy-eating-tips-families/cooking-with-kids.html)

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