

This time of year is busy. School is in full swing, weekends are booked with swim meets, football, birthday parties and trips to the camp. Not to mention the holidays are right around the corner. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle as a parent is difficult not just for yourself but also with keeping your kids on track.

There are three things to remember to keep on track with family nutrition while not getting too complicated:

Cook healthy

Involve your child in the cutting, mixing and preparation of all meals. Even a snack can be healthy. Nutritionally, think vegetables, fruits, lean meat and whole grain.

Eat right

Sit down together as a family to enjoy a wonderful meal and the opportunity to communicate with one another.

Shop smart

To encourage a healthy lifestyle, get your children involved in selecting the food that will appear at the breakfast, lunch or dinner table.

Can you get your family together at mealtime at least a few times a week? Research shows that family meals promote healthier eating – more fruits, vegetables and fiber; less fried food; often fewer calories. And they do far more than put healthful food on the table.

In our haste to get meals prepared, we may forget that mealtime gives

time to talk, listen and build family relationships. And it's a chance for parents to be good role models for healthful eating.

Evening swim practice can make this a challenging goal, one that will never be accomplished if you do not try and make it a priority. A few suggestions to help you sit down to eat together:

- Set a regular family mealtime. Pick a time together. Be creative, dinner time may not be an option, but how about breakfast, lunches on school holidays and weekends.
- Enjoy more table time, less cooking time. Make quick, simple meals (even a sandwich, fruit and milk) to give more table time together.
- Turn off the TV. Turn on the phone answering machine. Focus mealtime on family talk.
- Keep table talk positive. Everyone gets to talk and to listen. Sitting around a table, not side-by-side at the counter, helps.
- Keep table time realistic – not so long that the pleasure goes away.

TRICK OR TREAT!

It's easier than ever to find Halloween treats to make kids happy while providing a health benefit. Grocery store shelves are stocked with kid-friendly favorites containing whole grains, extra vitamin C, 100-percent fruit juice and added fiber.

This year, consider mixing up the candy bowl with some of these items:

- Whole-grain cheddar flavored crackers
- Fruit snacks made with 100-percent fruit with added vitamin C
- Sugar-free gum
- Animal-shaped graham crackers made without trans fat
- Mini rice cereal treat bars
- Cereal bars made with real fruit
- Mini 100-percent fruit juice boxes
- Baked, unsalted bags of pretzels
- Halloween-themed stickers, pencils and temporary tattoos.

Have fun by tricking your family with these healthy Halloween Treats:



Puking Pumpkin

2 Avocado, mashed
 ½ onion, finely chopped
 1 lemon, squeezed
 (or your favorite guacamole recipe, or store bought)
 Blend the above ingredients. Carve and clean a pumpkin. Position your guacamole to pour out of his mouth.



Monthly challenge:

Teenage Athlete- Come up with a fun Halloween dish to share with your family.

Parents – Sit down together for a Halloween family meal!

Veggie Man

All your favorite dipping veggies.
Veggie man's face is the dip bowl.
Position your veggies to build a skeleton.



Vampire Teeth

Slice red apples, spread with peanut butter and sandwich marshmallows between the two slices.