



**EAT**  
*together*







# WHY SHOULD WE EAT TOGETHER?

## **NUTRITION**

Families that eat together, eat better. Studies show that eating as a family improves the type and variety of food we eat. When families eat together they eat more vegetables, fruit and milk products. This balanced eating will help your family maintain a healthy weight.

## **FAMILY TRADITION**

Families that eat together, stay together. Family members develop a strong sense of belonging. Good memories and traditions formed during meal time stay with a child for the rest of their lives.

## **BETTER GRADES and SKILL DEVELOPMENT**

Families that eat together, do better. Children whose families eat together do better in school. When children help prepare meals they learn important cooking skills and to enjoy many kinds of foods.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Families that eat together, talk more. Children become better communicators and have fewer behavioural and social problems.

## **COST SAVINGS**

Families that eat together, save more. With a little bit of planning the money saved can be used for other fun family activities.





# 10 TIPS FOR TOP FAMILY MEALS

The key to a family meal is planning.

- 1 Aim for four or more family meals per week. Remember a family meal doesn't have to be supper, it can be breakfast.
- 2 Make family meals a priority.
- 3 Keep a sense of humour and laugh a lot.
- 4 It's okay to cook it quick but eat it slow.
- 5 Keep conversation happy and relaxed at meals.
- 6 When time is an issue, keep it simple.
- 7 Plan and cook together.
- 8 Prepare the same meal for everyone. Include at least one food everyone likes.
- 9 Turn off the television and take phone calls later.
- 10 Let everyone decide how much to eat.



## BREAKING THE BARRIERS TO EATING TOGETHER

**Work, sports or other commitments?**

- Be flexible with the time of meals. If children have after school activities, plan to have dinner before or after or have breakfast or lunch together instead.
- Be creative as to where you eat. Have a picnic in the bleachers or on the field.

**Everyone's taste buds are different.**

- Get your kids involved. If they help make it, they will be more likely to eat it.
- Let everyone plan a day's menu. This way everyone gets to have a favourite meal.

**Too tired or busy to plan, shop and cook?**

- Keep meals simple and easy. Dinner can be nutritious but quick.
- Have everyone help. Someone can plan, someone can shop and someone can chop.
- Stock your pantry and freezer once a month with some quick to fix staples. (See shopping list for ideas.)

# QUICK TIPS TO QUICK SHOPPING



### Items to Always Have on Hand

- Flour
- Sugar
- Baking powder
- Baking soda
- Salt & pepper
- Spices (oregano, basil, garlic powder, chili powder, etc.)
- Butter
- Cooking oil (canola or olive)
- Condiments (ketchup, mustard, salsa, vinegar, jam, syrup, etc.)

### Monthly Grocery List

- Carrots
- Onions
- Potatoes
- Rice\*
- Pasta\*
- Canned tomatoes/spaghetti sauce\*\*
- Dried/canned lentils or beans (kidney, white, etc.)\*\*
- Canned/frozen vegetables and fruit\*\*
- Canned soup\*\*
- Peanut/almond butter
- Cereals\*
- Nuts and seeds

### Weekly Grocery List

- Fresh vegetables and fruit\*\*\*
- Milk
- Cheese
- Yogurt
- Eggs
- Red meat, fish, chicken and/or turkey
- Bread and buns\*



\* Make at least half of your grain products whole grain each day. For example, oatmeal, brown rice, barley, quinoa and whole wheat bread and pasta.  
 \*\* Choose canned goods packaged with little or no added fat, sugar or salt.  
 \*\*\* Choose what is in season as the price is better.





## 30 MINUTE SKILLET MEALS

(makes 4 servings)

- 1 Combine all starter ingredients in a large skillet over medium-high heat for about 10 minutes or until cooked.
- 2 Add sauce ingredients to skillet over medium-high heat and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes or until slightly thickened.
- 3 Add vegetables, if applicable, and cook for 3 to 5 minutes or until tender.
- 4 Add flavouring and stir until combined.
- 5 Serve with pasta, rice or noodles, where indicated.
- 6 Toss a garden salad or have veggies and dip on the side.
- 7 For a complete meal, have a glass of cold milk.



### Creamy Chicken and Lemon Pasta

Starter Ingredients	Sauce	Vegetables	Flavouring	Grains* (Pasta, Rice or Noodles)
2 tsp (10 ml) butter 4 garlic cloves, minced 1 lb (500 g) diced skinless, boneless chicken breasts or thighs 7 oz (225 g) sliced mushrooms pinch of salt and pepper	10 oz (284 ml) can sodium reduced cream of mushroom soup 1 1/4 cups (284 ml) milk	1 1/2 cups (375 ml) frozen green peas	2 tbsp (25 ml) chopped fresh basil or 2 tsp (10 ml) dried 1 tbsp (15 ml) lemon juice	350 g (3/4 lb) uncooked fettuccine, cooked according to package directions. Add to sauce and toss to combine.

### Mexican Corn Chili

Starter Ingredients	Sauce	Vegetables	Flavouring	Grains* (Pasta, Rice or Noodles)
2 tsp (10 ml) butter 4 garlic cloves, minced **1 lb (500 g) extra lean ground beef 1-2 tsp (5-10 ml) crushed dried chilies pinch of salt and pepper	24 oz (796 ml) can diced tomatoes 2 tbsp (25 ml) sweet chili sauce	14 oz (398 ml) canned corn kernels, drained	3 tbsp (40 ml) chopped fresh parsley or 3 tsp (15 ml) dried 1/3 to 1/2 cup (75-125 ml) grated Canadian cheddar cheese	3/4 lb (350 g) uncooked pasta or rice of your choice, cooked according to package directions. Serve chili over pasta or rice.

### Cheese Tortellini with Roasted Red Peppers

Starter Ingredients	Sauce	Vegetables	Flavouring	Grains* (Pasta, Rice or Noodles)
	1 tbsp (15 ml) butter 4 garlic cloves, minced 1 1/2 cups (375 ml) tomato pasta sauce pinch of salt 1/2 tsp (2 ml) ground pepper 1 cup (250 ml) roasted red peppers (deli or jarred) drained and chopped		3 tbsp (40 ml) sour cream or plain yogurt 3 tbsp (40 ml) chopped fresh basil or 3 tsp (10 ml) dried	350 g (3/4 lb) package cheese tortellini cooked according to package directions. Add to sauce and toss to combine.

### Chicken, Potato and Broccoli Skillet Bake

Serve with whole wheat dinner rolls

Starter Ingredients	Sauce	Vegetables	Flavouring	Grains* (Pasta, Rice or Noodles)
2 tsp (10 ml) butter 4 garlic cloves, minced 1 lb (500 g) diced skinless, boneless chicken breasts or thighs pinch of salt and pepper	2 cups (500 ml) low sodium chicken broth 1 tbsp (25 ml) honey 1 1/2 cups (375 ml) white potatoes, diced small 1 1/2 cups (375 ml) chopped carrots	3 cups (750 ml) chopped broccoli (1 large head)	3 tbsp (40 ml) sour cream 2 tbsp (25 ml) chopped fresh parsley or 2 tsp (10 ml) dried 1/3 cup (75 ml) finely grated Parmesan cheese	

\* Choose whole grains more often.

\*\* For a meatless version use 2 - 14 oz (398 ml) cans mixed beans, drained and rinsed.





# PIZZA

Choose your favourite base and use these ideas to create your masterpiece. Serve with a glass of cold milk for a complete meal. If using uncooked pizza crust, cook according to package instructions.

## Bacon, Tomato and Onion Pizza

- 1 x 12" (30 cm) ready-made thin crust base
- 3 tbsp (40 ml) pizza or pasta sauce
- 2 tbsp (25 ml) sweet chili sauce
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) chopped back bacon
- 1/3 cup (75 ml) thinly sliced white or red onion
- 3 small (or 1 large) ripe tomatoes, sliced
- 1 cup (250 ml) shredded Canadian mozzarella or pizza blend cheese

Preheat oven to 475 F (230 C). Place pizza base on large baking sheet. Spread pizza sauce and sweet chili sauce over pizza base. Top with ingredients in order given. Bake in preheated oven for about 15 minutes or until base is golden brown and crisp. Serves 4.

## Spinach and Chicken Pizza

- 4 (6-7"/15-18 cm) whole wheat pita breads
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) pizza or pasta sauce
- 1 cup (250 ml) diced cooked chicken
- 1 cup (250 ml) baby spinach leaves, packed
- 2/3 cup (150 ml) coarsely crumbled Canadian feta cheese
- 1 cup (250 ml) shredded Canadian mozzarella or pizza blend cheese

Preheat oven to 475 F (230 C). Place pita bread on two baking sheets. Spread sauce over each pita bread. Top with ingredients in order given. Bake in preheated oven for about 10 minutes or until bread is golden brown and crisp. Serves 4.

## Sweet and Sour Pizza

- 1 x 12" (30 cm) ready-made thin crust base
- 1/4 cup (50 ml) bottled sweet and sour sauce
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) diced red pepper
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) pineapple tidbits, drained
- 1/4 cup (50 ml) thinly sliced white or red onion
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) diced cooked ham
- 1 cup (250 ml) shredded Canadian mozzarella or pizza blend cheese

Preheat oven to 475 F (230 C). Place pizza base on large baking sheet. Spread sauce over pizza base. Top with ingredients in order given. Bake in preheated oven for about 15 minutes or until base is golden brown and crisp. Serves 4.

## Tex-Mex Pizza

- 2 tsp (10 ml) canola oil
- 3/4 lb (375 g) extra lean ground beef
- 2 1/2 tbsp (30 ml) taco seasoning mix
- 1/3 cup (75 ml) water
- 4 (6-7"/15-18 cm) whole wheat pita breads
- 1/4 to 1/3 cup (50 ml to 75 ml) taco sauce
- 1 cup (250 ml) shredded tex-mex cheese
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) diced fresh tomatoes
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) shredded lettuce
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) guacamole (your own or store-bought), optional
- 1/4 cup (50 ml) sour cream, optional

Heat oil in a large frying pan over medium-high heat. Add beef and cook, stirring, for about 5 minutes or until lightly browned. Add seasoning and water and stir until combined. Cook for about 5 minutes or until thickened; cool slightly.

Preheat oven to 475 F (230 C). Place pita bread on two baking sheets. Spread taco sauce over each pita bread. Top with meat and sprinkle with cheese. Bake in preheated oven for about 10 minutes or until bread is golden brown and crisp. Top pizzas with remaining ingredients in order given. Serves 4.

## Thai Chicken Pizza

- 4 (6-7"/15-18 cm) whole wheat pita breads
- 1/4 cup (50 ml) bottled satay peanut sauce
- 1 cup (250 ml) diced cooked chicken
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) diced red pepper
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) pineapple tidbits, drained
- 1 cup (250 ml) shredded Canadian mozzarella or pizza blend cheese
- 2 tbsp (25 ml) chopped fresh cilantro
- lime wedges, optional

Preheat oven to 475 F (230 C). Place pita bread on two baking sheets. Spread satay sauce over each pita bread. Top with chicken, pepper, pineapple and cheese. Bake in preheated oven for about 10 minutes or until bread is golden brown and crisp. Top pizzas with cilantro and serve with lime wedges if desired. Serves 4.

Recipes are based on Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide.  
For more information go to [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide)





**For more  
nutrition and recipe  
information visit  
[moreaboutmilk.com](http://moreaboutmilk.com)  
and  
[easytastyhealthy.ca](http://easytastyhealthy.ca)**

