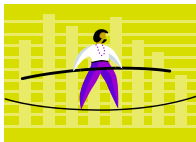


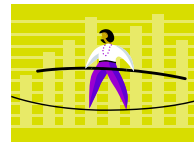


### A Fact About Family Meals

To make it easier to get the whole family gathered around the table at the same time identify obstacles to family mealtime. Coordinating schedules can be tough, but it can be done. If supper is impossible try a late night dessert gathering or breakfast!



### Balancing Food, Fun & Fitness



#### Help Children Develop Healthy Habits

You can help your child develop healthy habits early in life that will bring lifelong benefits. As a parent, you can encourage your kids to evaluate their food choice and physical activity habits.

Here are some tips and guidelines to get started.

- **Be a good role model** – You don't have to be perfect all the time, but if kids see you trying to eat right and getting physical active, they'll take notice of your efforts. You'll send a message that good health is important to your family.
- **Keep things positive** - Kid's don't like to hear what they can't do, tell them what they can do instead. Keep it fun and positive. Everyone likes to be praised for a job well done. Celebrate successes and help children and teens develop a good self-image.
- **Get the whole family moving** - Plan times for everyone to get moving together. Take walks, ride bikes, go swimming, garden or just play hide-and-seek outside. Everyone will benefit from the exercise and the time together.
- **Be realistic** - Setting realistic goals and limits are key to adopting any new behavior. Small steps and gradual changes can make a big difference in your health over time, so start small and build up.
- **Limit TV, video game and computer time** - These habits lead to a sedentary lifestyle and excessive snacking, which increase risks for obesity and cardiovascular disease. Limit screen time to 2 hours per day.
- **Pick truly rewarding rewards** - Don't reward children with TV, video games, candy or snacks for a job well done. Find other ways to celebrate good behavior.

Source: American Heart Association

#### Fill out survey and win a chance for a cookbook!!!

We would like you to please fill out the following survey on line. A lucky winner will receive a cookbook. Go to: <http://www.msuextension.org/familymealtime> . Please fill out survey by February 15th. Thank you.

#### Contact Us

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## SILENCE BUSTERS

Starting a conversation at the family dinner table can sometimes be a bit of a struggle. Everyone has things on their minds yet sometimes not much to say. Here are a couple of ideas to help get the mealtime conversation started:

*When was your first crush? Who was it and why did you like them?*

*If you could spend the day with someone living or dead, who would it be and why?*

*What is the best thing that has happened in 2011 so far?*

Keep it on the light side, leaving serious discussion for another time. Turn off the TV, cell phones and iPods and just listen to what each other has to say.

## HALFWAY HOMEMADE

One of the tricks to healthy, quick meals is maintaining a well stocked pantry. Don't think gourmet, think "get it on the table". Read the following lists of pantry staples and decide which ones make sense for your family's taste, budget and your cooking ambitions.

### Cans

vegetables	refried beans
black beans	tomatoes
kidney beans	tuna
soup	tomato sauce & paste
fruit in juice	pizza /spaghetti sauce

### Boxes

dry milk	cereal
noodles	crackers
rice	pancake mix
dry soup mix	macaroni & cheese

### Staples, Seasonings & Spices

peanut butter	bread
flour	sugar
baking powder	baking soda
bread crumbs	vanilla
cinnamon	chili powder
dried onions	garlic powder
Italian seasoning	chicken & beef bouillon

### Refrigerator

eggs	milk
butter/margarine	cheese
mustard	ketchup
salad dressing	tortilla shells

### Frozen Foods

ground beef  
vegetables  
bread

Here are two recipes you can quickly put together out of a well stocked pantry.

### Pizza Mac

1 pkg. (7 1/4 oz.) macaroni & cheese dinner  
2 eggs, lightly beaten  
1 jar (8 oz.) pizza sauce  
20 slices Canadian bacon or 40 slices pepperoni  
2 cups (8 oz) shredded mozzarella cheese or cheese of your choice.

Prepare macaroni and cheese according to directions. Fold in eggs. Spread into greased 13x9x2" baking dish. Top with pizza sauce, meat and cheese. Bake uncovered at 350° for 30-35 minutes or until lightly browned and cheese is melted. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving.

### Taco Skillet

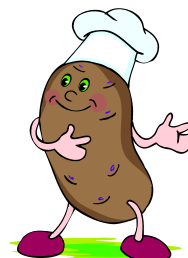
1 lb. ground beef	1 can tomato soup
1 cup salsa	1/2 cup water
8 corn tortillas ; cut in 1" strips	
1 cup shredded cheese of choice	

Cook beef in skillet until browned. Drain off fat. Add soup, salsa, water, tortillas and half the cheese. Heat to a boil. Cover and cook over low heat for 5 minutes. Sprinkle remaining cheese on before serving.

### Baked Potato Ideas

**Baked potatoes make a great starting place for a delicious healthy meal!**

Scrub potatoes, wrap them in foil and bake in a 350° oven for 1 to 1 1/4 hours, until potatoes are tender when poked with a fork.



#### Loaded Twice Baked Potatoes

4 medium russet potatoes	8 oz. lean ground beef
1 cup frozen chopped broccoli	1 cup water
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese, divided	1/2 cup reduced fat sour cream
Salt & pepper to taste	

Bake potatoes as described above. Brown ground beef in a large skillet over medium heat. Transfer to large bowl. Increase the heat to high and add broccoli and water to skillet, cover and cook on high for 4-5 minutes. Drain broccoli; add ground beef. Carefully cut off the top third of potato. Scoop insides out into a bowl. Add cheese, sour cream, salt & pepper and mash with masher or hand mixer. Add potato mixture to broccoli and meat. Stir to combine. Place potato skin shells in 9x9 microwave safe baking pan and evenly divide potato mixture among potato skins. Top with remaining cheese and heat in microwave for 4-5 minutes until filling is hot and cheese is melted.

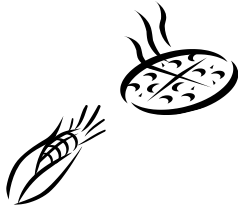
Other options for making a meal of a baked potato include:

- Top with taco meat and shredded cheese. Microwave until cheese melts.
- Top with melted cheese sauce and your favorite cooked vegetable.
- Top with spaghetti or pizza sauce; cut up Canadian bacon and top with mozzarella or parmesan cheese.
- Top with canned chili and a dollop of light sour cream.
- Top with chopped leftover chicken, bacon and tomato with light ranch dressing.
- Top with leftover chopped roast beef and gravy.
- Top with chopped ham from the deli, cooked broccoli and shredded cheese and a dollop of butter or sour cream.

The possibilities are endless!



## DOABLE DINNER



***Special Valentine Meal***  
**Italian Chicken with Fettuccine**  
**Tossed Salad & Garlic Bread**  
**Chocolate Fondue with Fruit**  
**Angel Food Cake**



### Italian Chicken

- 4 boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 1 jar (28 oz.) meatless spaghetti sauce
- 1/2 cup red wine, chicken broth or water
- Hot cooked fettuccine noodles
- Parmesan cheese

In non-stick skillet, cook chicken for 6 minutes on each side. Remove and keep warm. Put spaghetti sauce in pan, add wine and heat until warm. Add chicken, cover and simmer 10 minutes. Serve over fettuccine noodles and garnish with parmesan cheese.

### Shopping List

- Chicken breasts
- Jar Spaghetti sauce
- Fettuccine noodles
- Parmesan Cheese
- Bagged salad
- Garlic Bread
- Sweetened condensed milk
- Chocolate chips
- Angel Food Cake
- Strawberries, Bananas or other fruit of choice

### Easy Chocolate Fondue

- 1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 2 TBSP butter or margarine
- 1 (14 oz.) can sweetened condensed milk
- 2 TBSP water
- 1 tsp vanilla



In heavy saucepan, over low heat, melt chocolate chips, butter, condensed milk and water. Cook, stirring constantly until thick, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and add vanilla. If you don't have a fondue pot, place fondue in heated glass or ceramic bowl and place it in larger bowl with hot water in the bottom. Use strawberries, bananas, pineapple, kiwi or angel food cake as a dipper.

*This newsletter is available by mail on request. Contact one of the Extension Offices listed on the first page to request a mailed copy.*

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