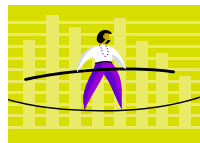


Welcome to the first edition of Mealttime Solutions. This e-newsletter is brought to you by the Montana State University Extension Service. Each month, a new newsletter will be delivered to your inbox with ideas for quick and easy healthy family meals.

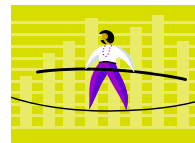
### A Fact About Family Meals

The more often children and teens eat dinner with their families, the less likely they are to smoke, drink and use drugs.

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University



### Balancing Food, Fun & Fitness



### Garden in a Bucket

One sure way to get your kids to try fresh, nutritious vegetables is to let them grow their own veggies from seeds. A bucket garden is a fun and easy way for kids to raise and enjoy their own fresh produce. Here's how:

- Have the kids pick out a colorful bucket or pail and vegetable seeds or bedding plants of their choice.
- Poke drainage holes in the bottom of the bucket with a hammer and nail.
- Let each child write their name on their bucket with a permanent marker.
- Have the kids fill their buckets  $\frac{2}{3}$  full of the potting mix. Soilless mixes tend to be the lightest and will be easier for a child to carry in the bucket.
- Give the kids a small handful of time release fertilizer pellets to sprinkle and mix into the soil.
- Help the kids plant their seeds or plants. Add more soil if necessary.
- Water the Garden in a Bucket and that's it!
- Maintain the Garden in a Bucket by keeping it watered and weeded.
- Kids can check to see if the garden needs water by poking their finger gently into the soil. Most container gardens need to be watered daily.
- Harvest and enjoy the fresh veggies.

#### TO SUBSCRIBE:

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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 meal-time conversation started:

*If you could invite any famous person in the world to spend a week-end with us, who would it be?*

*What is the best present you have ever received from someone?*

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

The next time you are in the need of a quick meal, pick up a rotisserie chicken. If they are on sale, pick up two. Quick and healthy meal ideas for a rotisserie chicken are endless. You can eat it as is with a side or two or you can give that bird a whole new personality with just a quick change or two.

### Meal Idea:

Sliced rotisserie chicken  
Wedged baked potatoes (see recipe below)  
Tossed salad w/ low-fat dressings  
Watermelon wedges  
Milk

### Wedged Baked Potatoes (Microwave recipe)

4 medium baking potatoes or 6 small red ones, quartered

¼ cup vegetable oil

3 tablespoons Parmesan cheese

1 teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon paprika

¼ teaspoon pepper

½ teaspoon garlic salt

Mix seasonings in a cereal bowl. Brush potatoes with oil and dip in the seasoning mixture until they are completely coated. Put on microwave dish and bake for 4 to 6 minutes (depending on size of potatoes and the microwave) and turn them about half way through. You may want to put these under the broiler for a minute or two to make the seasonings a bit crunchy.

### Shopping List:

- Rotisserie Chicken
- Potatoes
- Bagged Salad
- Watermelon



Here are some ideas that can give your chicken a whole new look or help use up any leftovers. *Remove the skin to reduce the calories from fat.*

- **Chicken Tacos:** Shred meat and season with taco seasoning. Eat with taco or tortilla shells and your favorite taco toppings.
- **Chicken Caesar Wraps:** Use bagged Caesar salad and store-bought tortillas or flatbreads.
- Make toasted chicken, lettuce, tomato and bacon sandwiches.
- **Chicken Salad:** Mix diced chicken with chopped walnuts, celery, and apples or pears. Make a dressing of mayonnaise thinned with orange juice and stir into the chicken mixture. Red or green seedless grape halves also work well.
- **Barbecue Chicken Sandwiches:** Shred chicken with a fork. Mix with bottled barbecue sauce, heat and serve on toasted buns.
- **Barbecue Chicken Pizza:** Spread a pre-made pizza crust with barbecue sauce. Sprinkle with diced chicken and chopped red onion. Top with mozzarella cheese, or a mixture of cheddar and mozzarella, and bake.
- **Chicken Quesadillas:** Sandwich diced or shredded chicken and shredded cheese (use your favorite) between two corn or flour tortillas on a microwave safe plate. Microwave 30-45 seconds until cheese is melted.

## QUICK FIXES

### Make Mine a Burger



One of the quickest meals is a juicy hamburger. During the summer months you can enjoy a barbecued hamburger in a matter of minutes, with the help of a gas grill. Use approximately 1 pound of ground beef to serve four people. Think outside the box when you go to buy buns. Pita bread, tortillas, Kaiser rolls or toasted crusty bread all add variety.

*Use a thermometer to cook hamburger to 165 F to kill bacteria that may be present.*

The possibilities are endless when you expand on the basic burger. Here are some ideas:

**SOUTHWESTERN BURGER:** Add 1 tablespoon of taco seasoning to lean ground beef. Cook inside or on the grill. Top it off with shredded lettuce, shredded cheddar cheese, sliced black olives and salsa. For a little extra “fire” you can use pepper jack cheese and add some sliced jalapenos.

**ITALIAN BURGER:** Add ½ to 1 teaspoon of Italian herbs to lean ground beef. Cook inside or on the grill until almost done. Top each burger with a slice of Mozzarella cheese. When done, top with a spoonful of pizza sauce and a slice of red onion and green, red or yellow pepper.

**SMOKEY BACON BURGER:** Put some onion slices on the grill in a packet made of aluminum foil and cook one slice of bacon per burger (or use pre-cooked bacon). Cook your burgers inside or on the grill until almost done. Top with a spoonful of bottled smokey barbecue sauce, bacon and cooked onion slices.

To complete this quick meal try some of the following:

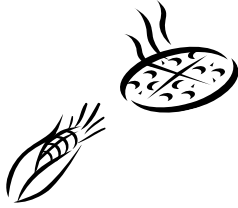
- Fruit salad or sliced watermelon
- Cut up veggies
- Canned baked beans, heated or right out of the can
- Purchased macaroni or potato salad



*A three-ounce serving of 90% lean ground beef (cooked, broiled) has 184 calories, 22 grams of protein and is high in niacin, selenium, vitaminB12 and zinc.*



## DOABLE DINNER



**Mexi-Beef Casserole**  
 Raw baby carrots w/ low-fat dip  
 Sliced strawberries  
 Fat-free or low-fat milk



### Mexi-Beef Casserole

- 1 (16-ounce) package egg noodles, cooked
- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 1 (15-ounce) can corn, drained
- 1 (15-ounce) can black beans or kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 1/4 cups mild salsa
- 1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce
- 1 (1-ounce) package taco seasoning
- 1/4 cup sliced black olives, optional

Cook noodles and drain. Brown beef in skillet and drain excess fat. In large bowl, combine all ingredients. Pour into a 9- x 13-inch pan sprayed with nonstick cooking spray. Bake at 350 F for 30 to 40 minutes. Makes 8 servings.

*Recipe courtesy of NDSU Extension Service Food Wise Newsletter, May 2009*

### Shopping List

- ✓ Noodles
- ✓ Ground Beef
- ✓ Canned Corn
- ✓ Canned Beans
- ✓ Salsa
- ✓ Tomato Sauce
- ✓ Taco Seasoning
- ✓ Sliced Black Olives
- ✓ Baby carrots
- ✓ Strawberries

*Each serving has 390 calories, 60 grams (g) carbohydrate, 5 g fat, 6 g fiber and 800 milligrams sodium.*

### Suggestions for this Meal

- \* **Brown the ground beef ahead to save time putting this dish together.**
- \* **Make two casseroles and freeze one to use later.**
- \* **Freeze in meal-size portions for those times when the evening schedules are crazy and everyone will be eating at a different time.**
- \* **Use whole grain noodles for added nutritional value.**
- \* **As a time saver, purchase pre-cut veggies and fruit.**

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