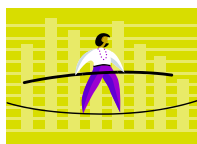
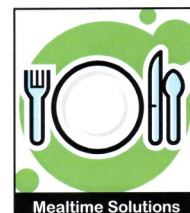
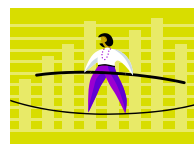


A Fact About Family Meals

Are you looking for ways to connect with your children and help them be healthier? Sharing meals together and turning off the television set during your meal are two ways for parents to encourage their children to make healthier food choices, maintain a healthy weight, and to share family interests and values.



Balancing Food, Fun & Fitness



Crock Pot Meals

There is nothing like coming home from work to the smell of dinner cooking in the crockpot. The crockpot is a great appliance for busy families that prefer a healthy meal. Preparation can be easy, and you can include a wide variety of foods and the clean-up is a snap. The benefit of the crockpot include:

1. The crockpot offers "all-day cooking without looking". Most meat and vegetable combinations can cook 8-10 hours unattended and one-step preparation is convenient.
2. Food doesn't overcook or burn if left longer than required. Food cooked slowly will be tender after prolonged cooking, so you can use less tender cuts of meat which are usually more economical.
3. The crockpot is economical to operate and doesn't heat up the kitchen. There are lots of positives about using the crockpot for food preparation but it does require a little extra attention to food safety. First, start with thawed food; if you have to use a frozen cut of meat, add one cup of warm water to the pot first then place the meat in the crock. Second, fill the crock at least half full but not more than three-quarters full. It is a good idea to cook for one hour on high and then change to a lower setting called for in the recipe. This is especially suggested for raw meat and poultry. Third, do not remove the lid while cooking. The temperature drops 10-15 degrees when the lid is removed. Last, do not reheat foods in the crockpot. Reheat on the stove to 165 degrees. However, food can be reheated on the stove or oven to 165 degrees and then placed in the crockpot to keep food hot until served.

TO SUBSCRIBE:

It's easy to sign up for MealtIME SOLUTIONS. Send an email or call one of the MSU Extension Offices listed at the right side of this page and leave your email address. Feel free to spread the word to your family and friends.

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SILENCE BUSTERS

When everyone is tired and it is the end of the day, it is sometimes hard to get dinner conversation started. Here are a couple of ideas to get things going.

What is one thing you would like to change about your school?

What is the nicest thing you have ever done for someone else?

Conversation starters are available on the intranet. Print off a list and let a different family member choose a topic each night.

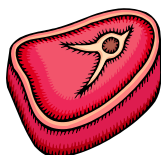
HALFWAY HOMEMADE

This is an easy crockpot pot roast that supplies a one dish meal for your family with only minutes of preparation and easy clean-up, and a wonderful aroma when you walk in the door at night.

Crockpot Pot Roast

Ingredients

- 1 (2 to 3 lbs.) beef chuck roast
- 1 medium quartered onion
- 1 small bag peeled baby carrots or a 15 oz. can of cut up carrots
- 4 medium potatoes quartered (you can peel if you like) or a 15 oz. can of small whole potatoes
- 1 can of cola



Place roast in crockpot. Place vegetables on top. If you are using canned vegetables wait to add them until the last hour. Pour can of cola over the top. Cook on high for 1 hour, turn to low and cook another 8 hours. This recipe makes the roast so tender it just falls apart.

Options: Add one package of onion soup mix, a can of mushrooms or 1 can of tomatoes or celery.

Another simple one dish crockpot meal using convenience items from the grocery store.

Italian Chicken

- 2 1/2 to 3 lbs. of chicken pieces
- 1 -26 oz. pasta sauce of your choice
- 1 bag of frozen Italian vegetables with peppers

Place chicken in slow cooker. Pour pasta sauce over chicken. Cover and cook on a low setting for 6-7 hours. Add vegetables during the last hour of cooking. Serve on whole wheat pasta.



QUICK FIXES

Autumn

Autumn is a great time to include apples and pumpkin in your meal plans.

Apple Salad— Combine a chopped red apple, chopped green apple and a container of low-fat vanilla yogurt for an easy Waldorf salad. Other possible additions include 1/4 cup raisins, celery and/ or nuts.



Sliced apples with peanut butter make a great fast breakfast or afternoon snack.

Oatmeal made in the crockpot. Combine 1 1/3 cup oatmeal and 2 1/2 cups water (use milk for creamier oatmeal and a calcium boost). Add one chopped apple. Cover and cook on low for 6 hours. Enjoy hot, fruity oatmeal for breakfast without any fuss.

Slow Cooker Pumpkin Pudding

This is a tasty dessert that is also high in vitamin A.

1 (15 oz) can pumpkin	3/4 cup sugar
1 (12 oz.) can evaporated milk	2 eggs beaten
1/2 cup buttermilk baking mix	1 1/2 tsp. vanilla
2 TBSP melted butter or margarine	
1 TBSP pumpkin pie spice	

Mix all ingredients together. Pour in a greased slow cooker. Cover and cook on low for 6 hours. Serve with low-fat ice cream.

Baked Apples

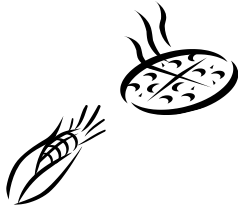
4 apples (Granny Smith apples work well), cored and unpeeled
1 tsp cinnamon
1/4 cup brown sugar
4 TBSP butter



Place apples in slow cooker. Combine brown sugar and cinnamon, stuff into the center of the apples. Top each with butter. Cover and cook on low for 4-5 hours. Serve as side dish or with low-fat ice cream for dessert.



DOABLE DINNER



Spaghetti Sauce w/ Whole Wheat
Pasta
Bagged salad and Dressing
Garlic Bread
Low-Fat Milk



Slow Cooker Spaghetti Sauce

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1 lb. ground beef | 1– 6 oz. can tomato paste |
| 1 16 oz. can tomato sauce | 1 tsp. garlic powder |
| 2 tsp. oregano | 1/2 tsp. salt |
| 2 tsp. basil | 1 TBSP sugar |
| 2—14 oz. cans diced tomatoes with juice | |
| 1 medium onion chopped, or 1 cup frozen chopped onion | |

Brown meat and onion in pan. Drain well. Transfer to slow cooker. Add remaining ingredients. Cover and cook on low for 7 hours. If sauce seems thin, remove lid during last hour of cooking. You can combine all ingredients in slow cooker the night before in the refrigerator, and all you have to do in the morning is plug it in. Serve over cooked whole wheat pasta.

Shopping List

Ground Beef
Onion
Diced Tomatoes
Tomato Paste
Tomato Sauce
Garlic Bread
Bag Salad
Milk

All other ingredients
can be found in your
pantry.

Why Choose Whole Wheat Pasta?

The flavor and texture of whole wheat pasta has improved greatly over the past 5 years. If you haven't tried it recently you might want to give it another try. The health benefits are numerous! It is higher in both protein and fiber and is a better source of both manganese and magnesium than traditional pasta.

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