Most of us remember when family meal times were very different to what they are now. Remember when families actually sat down to a more formal meal every night? Now many family meal times are frantic operations performed in shifts due to many commitments outside the home. It is also now more likely that family meals are prepared at least in part from a convenience or pre-prepared food.

The other factor affecting family meal times is technology. Eating in front of a screen affects a vital positive aspect of family meal times - communication. Family conversations around the dinner table gives everyone a chance to share their daily successes and challenges.

So does it really matter if families aren’t eating together?

Studies are consistently showing that families who eat together regularly have:

- small children with more advanced vocabulary and more developed table manners
- school aged children with better school performance
- teenagers less likely to be involved in risky behaviours
- children with a healthier diet who are more likely to eat a wider variety of foods
- adults and children more likely to be a healthy weight

Our top tips for family meal times include

1. Turn off the screens.
2. Be a good eating role model for your children- they are watching what you eat and how you eat it.
3. Serve up vegetables, don’t be afraid to try new veg or previously rejected varieties.
4. Keep meal times calm and relaxed, despite any frustrations over fussy eaters.
5. Encourage children to eat until they are full and resist the urge to push for an empty plate or eating beyond appetite.

Do you want to know more about healthy eating? We are here to help!

Visit www.actnss.org today

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