

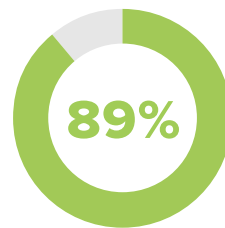


National Family Meals Month

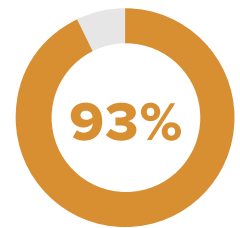


Launched by the FMI Foundation in September 2015, National Family Meals Month has grown to include more than 1,500 businesses and allied-health-organization supporters across the country. What started as a national initiative to encourage Americans to strive for just one more family meal per week at home has grown into a full-fledged movement, inspiring families, however defined, to keep sharing meals together to stay strong—physically and emotionally—throughout the year.

Consumers continue to enjoy more meals together than they did before the pandemic, with 89% saying they are having the same or more in-person family meals, according to the FMI Foundation’s “Staying Strong with Family Meals” Barometer. Moving forward, more than 93% of Americans sharing more meals with others plan to continue sharing more family meals at home. The Barometer is a recurring quantitative study among a nationally representative sample of consumers. These data coincide with a Harris Poll conducted at the end of 2021 that revealed 86% of the population indicated they thought it was important for families to have as many family meals together as possible each week.



are having the same or more in-person family meals as they did before the pandemic



of those sharing more meals with others plan to continue

Innumerable research studies show that family meals result in better nutritional intake, improved physical health and better mental health.

Following are just a few specific, evidence-based facts that can be used to support increasing the frequency of family meals.

- **Family meals improve fruit and vegetable consumption**, as evidenced by the positive relationship between family meal frequency and fruit and vegetable intake.¹
- **Family meals improve family functioning**, defined as family connectedness, communication, expressiveness, and problem-solving.²
- **Family meals deepen relationships with family and friends** which is good for your mental and physical health. In fact, it's as important to your health and well-being as sleep, exercise, and food.³⁻⁵
- **With family meals parents can influence and improve food choices, model good nutrition, and build family relationships**—all of which leads to better weight management, improved physical health and improved mental health.^{1,2,6}
- **Young parents who cultivate the tradition of regular family meals** have healthier dietary outcomes, weight outcomes and psychosocial outcomes.⁷
- **Family meals free from distractions** provide a chance to positively influence eating behavior and improve health and well-being.⁸⁻⁹



- **Family meals nourish the body and the mind.**^{1,2,10-12}
- **Family meals represent valuable opportunities to improve mental and physical health**, by combining the benefits of good nutrition and the benefits of social connection.
- **However you define family, focus meals on togetherness, and maximize the benefits:**
 - Include children: Involve kids in meal planning, preparation and cooking.
 - Spur culinary interest: Challenge family members to create meal plans.
 - Ask about healthful substitutions: Favorite foods aren't always the most nutritious.
 - Enjoy the 'fruits' of your labor: Grow vegetables and herbs together as a family project.
 - Be fully present: Eliminate all distractions and focus your attention on those around the table.

#FamilyMealsMovement



1. Robson SM, McCullough MB, Rex S, Munafò MR, Taylor G. Family Meal Frequency, Diet, and Family Functioning: A Systematic Review With Meta-analyses. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*. 2020;52(5):553-564. doi:10.1016/j.jneb.2019.12.012
2. Goldfarb SS, Tarver WL, Locher JL, Preskitt J, Sen B. A systematic review of the association between family meals and adolescent risk outcomes. *Journal of Adolescence*. 2015;44:134-149. doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2015.07.008
3. Holt-Lunstad J, Robles TF, Sbarra DA. Advancing social connection as a public health priority in the United States. *Am Psychol*. 2017;72(6):517-530. doi:10.1037/amp0000103
4. Levula A, Wilson A, Harré M. The association between social network factors and mental health at different life stages. *Qual Life Res*. 2016;25(7):1725-1733. doi:10.1007/s11136-015-1200-7
5. Holt-Lunstad J, Smith TB, Layton JB. Social relationships and mortality risk: A meta-analytic review. *PLoS Med*. 2010;7(7):e1000316. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1000316
6. Utter J, Larson N, Berge JM, Eisenberg ME, Fulkerson JA, Neumark-Sztainer D. Family meals among parents: Associations with nutritional, social and emotional wellbeing. *Preventive Medicine*. 2018;113:7-12. doi:10.1016/j.ypmed.2018.05.006
7. Berge JM, Miller J, Watts A, Larson N, Loth KA, Neumark-Sztainer D. Intergenerational transmission of family meal patterns from adolescence to parenthood: longitudinal associations with parents' dietary intake, weight-related behaviours and psychosocial well-being. *Public Health Nutrition*. 2017;21(2):299-308. doi:10.1017/s1368980017002270
8. Middleton G, Golley RK, Patterson KA, Coveney J. The Family Meal Framework: A grounded theory study conceptualising the work that underpins the family meal. *Appetite*. 2022;175:106071. doi:10.1016/j.appet.2022.106071
9. Saltzman JA, Musaad S, Bost KK, McBride BA, Fiese BH. Associations between father availability, mealtime distractions and routines, and maternal feeding responsiveness: An observational study. *Journal of Family Psychology*. 2019;33(4):465-475. doi:10.1037/fam0000519
10. Carpenter S. That gut feeling. *American Psychological Association*. 2012;43(8):50. Accessed October 27, 2021. <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2012/09/gut-feeling>
11. Firth J, Marx W, Dash S, et al. The Effects of Dietary Improvement on Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety. *Psychosomatic Medicine*. 2019;81(3):265-280. doi:10.1097/psy.0000000000000673
12. Grosso G. Nutritional Psychiatry: How Diet Affects Brain through Gut Microbiota. *Nutrients*. 2021;13(4):1282. doi:10.3390/nu1304128290/nu13041282