

# National Family Meals Month™

Join the Movement to Make Family Meals at Home Easier!

September



FMI Foundation



**MANUFACTURER TOOLKIT**  
REVISED MARCH 2018



September is National Family Meals Month,<sup>™</sup> an industry-wide movement to raise awareness of the benefits of frequent family meals. Join us as we work collaboratively with retailers and suppliers from across the country to bring families back to the table to share one more meal at home per week.



Established in 1996, the Food Marketing Institute Foundation seeks to ensure continued quality and efficiency in the food retailing system and is operated for charitable, educational and scientific purposes. To help support the role of food retailing, the FMI Foundation focuses on research and education in the areas of food safety, nutrition, and health. The FMI Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

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# Join the Movement to Make Family Meals at Home Easier!



**The Food Marketing Institute Foundation invites you to join the movement and celebrate National Family Meals Month™!** September is National Family Meals Month™, an industry-wide movement to raise awareness of the benefits of frequent family meals. Join us, your trade association, as we work collaboratively with retailers and manufacturers nationwide to bring families back to the table to share one more meal at home per week. In 2015, the FMI Foundation created the concept of the National Family Meals Month campaign, developed the core materials necessary for lift-off, and inspired collaborations with food retailers and manufacturers. Three years later, the movement represents the great work of 78 grocery retailers, 30 food manufacturers, and 71 community collaborators. The seeds have been planted—and we look forward to working with you all to continue to grow the movement year after year!

**Family meals are at a critical intersection in our nation.** Research continues to demonstrate that magic happens during family mealtimes when children and parents gather around the table and engage each other in conversation. Family meals eaten at home have been proven to benefit the health and wellness of children and adolescents, to fight obesity, substance abuse and to make families stronger—creating a positive impact on our communities and our nation as a whole.

**Promoting family meals works!** Third-party data collected by Nielsen reveals that in 2016, 85% of shoppers said they took action after seeing the campaign (up from 75% in 2015).

**Food manufacturers are uniquely positioned to help.** The will to return to the table exists, but families need a friendly, familiar voice to show them the way. That voice is you and the way is the National Family Meals Movement. This movement is a first-of-its-kind collaboration among FMI Foundation, the food industry, and its valued customers. Food manufacturers, partnering with grocery retailers and community health advocates have tremendous potential to impact families and bring them back to the table. Additionally, food manufacturers can be the grocery industry's advocate by offering assets and services to get the word out in a bigger way.

**Offering mealtime solutions is good for shoppers and good for business.** This initiative positions your brand as an extension of the family unit and as a problem solver. National Family Meals Month™ highlights your company's investment in meal-focused programs, health, and wellness. It's a targeted opportunity to promote your products and create themed promotions across all categories. It also serves as an opportunity to spotlight existing family meals products and programs while engaging

shoppers in a creative, fun, and meaningful way. Ultimately, this initiative is designed to build awareness that food retailers and brands are the solution for family mealtimes.

## **Your company can participate in National Family Meals Month™ in a variety of ways.**

Whether you have a robust family meals program in place, or you're just getting started, there's a way to bring the family meals movement to your shoppers. This toolkit is designed to inspire and demonstrate how you can implement National Family Meals Month™ each September. It contains turnkey content and resources that you can use as-is or customize to your brand voice. Pick and choose among the following to support the promotion that works best for your company, your stores, and your customers:

- ▶ Key messages;
- ▶ Family meals research and trends;
- ▶ Visual files, including logos, campaign graphics, posters;
- ▶ Ideas for activation and integration via social media, in-store promotion, and paid advertising;
- ▶ Social media posts;
- ▶ Dedicated #hashtags to gather the conversation around the family meals topic;
- ▶ Turnkey broadcast content.

**Get started today—complement an existing promotion or start a new one.** The elements contained in this free toolkit are designed to complement your existing promotions and can be customized to fit your unique needs. Use these resources to take action and reap the recognition you deserve for rallying the movement!

**Talk to Us!** We want to hear from you and discuss ways we can implement in September! Contact us with questions and ideas about getting your brand involved:

[FamilyMealsMonth@fmi.org](mailto:FamilyMealsMonth@fmi.org)



# STEP 1: Rally Your Staff and Customers around the Cause



The movement begins with showing your support for family meals by telling your staff and consumers about the many benefits of sharing more meals at home as a family. These key messages and research can aid in communicating the importance of family meals and participating in National Family Meals Month™. Share the following with staff and incorporate into your customer messaging:

## Key Messages for Consumers

**We care about the health of you and your family! That's why we are celebrating National Family Meals Month™ in September, a nationwide event designed to share the benefits of family meals on the health of children and adults alike.**

- ▶ We know that juggling jobs, kids and the demands of a busy, modern life often come at the expense of family mealtime at home. As your grocer, we're your ally—the solution to your mealtime dilemma.
- ▶ You can find easy, healthy mealtime solutions in nearly every aisle of the store. Need help? We invest in our associates so they can help you find the mealtime solutions that work best for you and your family.

**Did you know that 63% of Americans decide what to eat less than an hour before eating?**

(SOURCE: HARTMAN GROUP, 2013)

- ▶ We offer an ever-expanded assortment of products that take the stress out of planning and preparing family meals: pre-prepped fresh ingredients, delicious readymade entrees and wholesome heat and eat dishes, and more.

**Researchers and health experts endorse and promote the lifelong benefits of family meals.**

- ▶ Numerous studies show that home-cooked meals nourish the spirit, brain and health of all family members.
- ▶ Family meals have been shown to have a positive impact on the nutrition status, health, and well-being of the entire family.
- ▶ Regular family meals are linked to the kinds of outcomes that we all want for our children: higher grades and self-esteem, healthier eating habits and less risky behavior.

**September, back-to-school season, is the perfect time to commit to sharing one more family meal at home per week.**

- ▶ With the start of a new school year, renew your commitment to creating and serving meals at home that nourish your kids' bodies, brains, and help them flourish for life.
- ▶ As you juggle new school routines and fall activities, we invite you to look to us, your grocer, for support. When it comes to making more shared mealtimes happen for your busy family, let us be your ally.

**We're helping your family eat well together to be well together.**

- ▶ We're committed to helping you make shared meals at home fun, affordable and healthier.
- ▶ We have knowledgeable staff available to help you locate products that meet special diet and nutrition requirements.

**You and your family are an important face of the National Family Meals Month™ movement! Engage with us and show your commitment to more meals together on social media.**

- ▶ Follow us on Facebook and Twitter for family meals focused content, including shopping tips and recipes.
- ▶ Show your support for National Family Meals Month™ by pledging on social media to Raise Your Mitt to Commit to sharing one more family meal at home per week.
- ▶ Have fun with the pledge and help us bring national awareness to the benefits of family meals with Raise Your Mitt to Commit selfies and the National Family Meals Month™ hashtag #familymealsmonth.
- ▶ Share your own family meal experiences, misadventures and solutions with your social channels, and don't forget to hashtag #familymealsmonth.

# Key Messages for Employees

**Created by the Food Marketing Institute Foundation, National Family Meals Month™ is a nationwide event designed to bring grocers, food manufacturers, and health advocates together in support of the benefits of family meals and underscore the role of these partnerships in helping families create and share more meals at home.**

- ▶ With a collective and coordinated message, we're joining with grocers nationwide to encourage families to share one more meal at home per week, reminding them that easy, healthy mealtime solutions can be found in nearly every supermarket aisle.
- ▶ Grocers are in a unique position to provide tangible solutions to the mealtime dilemma faced by modern, time-strapped families of all shapes and sizes.
- ▶ We offer an expanded assortment of mealtime solutions that take the stress out of planning and preparing family meals: pre-prepped fresh ingredients, delicious readymade entrees, wholesome heat-and-eat dishes and much more.

**Researchers, health experts and popular media are endorsing and promoting the lifelong benefits of family meals.**

- ▶ Numerous studies show that home-cooked meals nourish the spirit, brain and health of all family members.
- ▶ Regular family meals are linked to the kinds of outcomes that we all want for our children: higher grades and self-esteem, healthier eating habits and less risky behavior.

**September, back-to-school season, is the perfect time to encourage and help shoppers commit to sharing one more family meal at home per week.**

- ▶ With the start of a new school year, parents are ready and willing to make a renewed commitment to healthy meals that nourish their kids' brains and help them flourish.
- ▶ As families juggle their new school routines and fall activities, we want them to turn to us, their grocer, for help. As a grocer, offering solutions across the aisles, we're the ultimate ally to help bring family mealtime back to the table.

**We're helping shoppers eat well.**

- ▶ We're committed to helping make shared meals at home fun, affordable and healthier.
- ▶ We're providing customers with wellness programs to help improve their diet and overall health.
- ▶ We hire and train knowledgeable staff to help shoppers locate the products they need to meet their unique dietary and nutrition needs.
- ▶ Our in-store dietitians and wellness experts are available to help shoppers interpret nutrition labels.

**We're leveraging social media this September to activate shopper engagement during National Family Meals Month™, and to get families interacting about family mealtime.**

- ▶ We'll share family meals focused content in social channels throughout September, including the National Family Meals Month™ designated hashtag, #familymealsmonth. [insert your social media handles]
- ▶ We'll encourage consumers to raise their oven mitts and pledge to commit to one more family meal per week.

**Family mealtime starts with us. Raise Your Mitt to Commit to one more meal, as a family, each week.**

- ▶ We want selfies with the hashtag #familymealsmonth to go viral as we all post our "Raise a Mitt" pledge photos, mealtime pictures, favorite recipes and tips we've learned from [insert your campaign name] to our social media feeds.

## Benefits of Family Meals

### ► Overall Health and Nutrition

Reducing away-from-home eating leads to healthier children.

SOURCE: ALTMAN, M; HOLLAND, JC; LUNDEEN, D; KOLKO, RP; STEIN, RI; SAELENS, BE; WELCH, RR; PERRI, MG; SCHECHTMAN, KB; EPSTEIN, LH; WILFLEY, DE. "REDUCTION IN FOOD AWAY FROM HOME IS ASSOCIATED WITH IMPROVED CHILD RELATIVE WEIGHT AND BODY COMPOSITION OUTCOMES AND THIS RELATION IS MEDIATED BY CHANGES IN DIET QUALITY." JOURNAL OF THE ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS 115, NO. 9 (SEP 2015): 1400-1407.

Numerous studies have found that eating with others, particularly family, is associated with healthier dietary outcomes for both children and adults.

SOURCE: FULKERSON, JA; LARSON, N; HORNING, M; NEUMARK-SZTAINER, D. "A REVIEW OF ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN FAMILY OR SHARED MEAL FREQUENCY AND DIETARY AND WEIGHT STATUS OUTCOMES ACROSS THE LIFESPAN." JOURNAL OF NUTRITION EDUCATION AND BEHAVIOR 46, NO. 1 (JAN 2014): 2-19.

People who eat the most home-cooked meals eat healthier and consume about 130 fewer calories daily, on average, compared to people who cook less or not at all.

SOURCE: WOLFSON, J. AND BLEICH, S. (2014). IS COOKING AT HOME ASSOCIATED WITH BETTER DIET QUALITY OR WEIGHT-LOSS INTENTION? PUBLIC HEALTH NUTRITION, PUBLISHED ONLINE 17 NOVEMBER 2014.

Educational and public health initiatives aimed at promoting shared family mealtimes may improve nutritional health of children and adolescents.

Clinicians may advise their patients about the benefits of sharing three or more family mealtimes per week. Benefits include a reduction in the odds for overweight (12%), eating unhealthy foods (20%), and disordered eating (35%) and an increase in the odds for eating healthy foods (24%).

SOURCE: HAMMONS, A. AND FIESE, B. (2011). IS FREQUENCY OF SHARED MEALS RELATED TO THE NUTRITIONAL HEALTH OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS? PEDIATRICS, 127 (6).

Participation in food purchasing and meal preparation is associated with better health outcomes than participating only in the mealtime activity itself.

SOURCE: CHAN, JC AND SOBAL, J. FAMILY MEALS AND BODY WEIGHT. ANALYSIS OF MULTIPLE FAMILY MEMBERS IN FAMILY UNITS. APPETITE, 2011.

Among countries in the developed world, those with food cultures centered on food enjoyment and conviviality, with widely shared, more sacrosanct mealtimes, currently enjoy better health outcomes (improved dietary quality, lower rates of obesity) than those that have reduced food and whose fragmented mealtimes have encouraged individualized eating.

SOURCE: FISCHLER, C. "COMMENSALITY, SOCIETY, AND CULTURE." SOCIAL SCIENCE INFORMATION 50, NO. 3-4 (AUG 31, 2011): 528-548.

On days when restaurants are used in lieu of home-prepared meals, dietary quality declines. Adults and children who eat at home more regularly are less likely to suffer from obesity.

SOURCE: INCORPORATING AWAY-FROM-HOME FOOD INTO A HEALTHY EATING PLAN, CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION. DEC 2008.

### ► Overweight and Obesity

In a study examining the relationship between everyday family rituals and BMI measurements, boys who have a social dinner experience tend to have lower BMI, notably when the family stays at the dinner table until everyone is finished eating. The results are the same for parents.

SOURCE: WANSINK, B. AND VAN KLEEF, E. (2014). DINNER RITUALS THAT CORRELATE WITH CHILD AND ADULT BMI. OBESITY, 22 (5).

There's clear evidence that the structure of a meal can heavily influence a child's long-term health. Kids and teens that share meals with their family three or more times per week are significantly less likely to be overweight, more likely to eat healthy foods and less likely to have eating disorders.

SOURCE: J. BERGE, "THE PROTECTIVE ROLE OF FAMILY MEALS FOR YOUTH OBESITY: 10-YEAR LONGITUDINAL ASSOCIATION. 2014

Children and adolescents who share family meals three or more times per week are more likely to be in a normal weight range and have healthier dietary and eating patterns than those who share fewer than three family meals together.

SOURCE: HAMMONS, A. AND FIESE, B. (2011). IS FREQUENCY OF SHARED MEALS RELATED TO THE NUTRITIONAL HEALTH OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS? PEDIATRICS, 127 (6).

Compared to family meals eaten at home, family meals eaten away from home are more strongly associated with high BMI.

SOURCE: CHAN, JC AND SOBAL, J. FAMILY MEALS AND BODY WEIGHT. ANALYSIS OF MULTIPLE FAMILY MEMBERS IN FAMILY UNITS. APPETITE, 2011.

Frequent family meals eaten away from home are more strongly associated with impacting the BMI of fathers than of other family members.

SOURCE: CHAN, JC AND SOBAL, J. FAMILY MEALS AND BODY WEIGHT. ANALYSIS OF MULTIPLE FAMILY MEMBERS IN FAMILY UNITS. APPETITE, 2011.

Adolescents who participate in even one or two family meals per week are less likely to be overweight or obese in adulthood compared to adolescents who never participate in family meals.

SOURCE: NEUMARK-SZTAINER, D. FAMILY MEALS AND ADOLESCENTS: WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM PROJECT EAT (EATING AMOUNT TEENS)? PUBLIC HEALTH NUTRITION, 2010.

### ► Diabetes

In adolescents with type 1 diabetes, improved dietary change outcomes are seen when the family is targeted as a whole opposed to the child with diabetes only.

SOURCE: JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN DIETETIC ASSOCIATION. PERCEIVED BENEFITS, BARRIERS, AND STRATEGIES OF FAMILY MEALS AMONG CHILDREN WITH TYPE 1 DIABETES MELLITUS AND THEIR PARENTS: FOCUS-GROUP FINDINGS 2010.

### ► Mental Health

Children who grow up sharing family meals are more likely to exhibit prosocial behavior as adults, such as sharing, fairness, and respect.

SOURCE: DE BACKER, CHARLOTTE, JS, "OUR" FOOD VERSUS "MY" FOOD. INVESTIGATING THE RELATION BETWEEN CHILDHOOD SHARED FOOD PRACTICES AND ADULT PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR IN BELGIUM, APPETITE, 2014.

Further research suggests that teens who eat dinner with their parents regularly develop better relationships with them, do better in school, and are at lower risk of using drugs, drinking or smoking.

SOURCE: THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY DINNERS VIII, A CASACOLUMBIA™ WHITE PAPER (NATIONAL CENTER ON ADDICTION AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY), SEP 2012.

With each additional family meal shared each week, adolescents are less likely to show symptoms of depression, less likely to use or abuse drugs, and less likely to engage in delinquent acts.

SOURCES: MEIER, A. & MUSICK, K. VARIATION IN ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN FAMILY DINNERS AND ADOLESCENT WELL-BEING, JOURNAL OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY, 2014; HAMMONDS, A.J. & FIESE, B.A. IS FREQUENCY OF SHARED MEALS RELATED TO THE NUTRITIONAL HEALTH OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS. PEDIATRICS 2011.

Regular family meals in adolescent females may have long-term protective effects in the development of substance use.

SOURCE: JOURNAL OF ADOLESCENT HEALTH, MEALS AND SUBSTANCE USE, 2008.

#### ► Social

Historical and anthropological studies of everyday eating norms have revealed how shared meals have been essential for family bonding and the development of ethical children.

SOURCE: KERNER, S; CHOU, C; AND WARMIND, M., COMMENSALITY: FROM EVERYDAY FOOD TO FEAST. BLOOMSBURY ACADEMIC, 2015.

Self-regulation to avoid overeating may rely on the presence of other eaters who both model norms and monitor behaviors.

SOURCE: R. PLINER AND R. BELL, "A TABLE FOR ONE: THE PAIN AND PLEASURE OF EATING ALONE," IN MEALS IN SCIENCE AND PRACTICE, ED. HERBERT L. MEISELMAN. WOODHEAD PUBLISHING SERIES IN FOOD SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND NUTRITION, 2009.

## Impact of National Family Meals Month™

(SOURCE: NIELSEN. NATIONAL FAMILY MEALS MONTH: CAMPAIGN RESULTS. 2016)

- National Family Meals Month™ is valuable in conveying the importance of eating meals as a family. More consumers agree that it is extremely or very important to eat meals together as a family when they had familiarity with the campaign (85% vs. 64%).
- The movement is motivating consumers to act. In 2016, 85% of shoppers said they took action after seeing the campaign (up from 75% in 2015). 95% of those who saw the campaign on social media and/or email said that their consumption and/or shopping behavior changed.

- Many healthy actions were taken in households with children. In 2016, households with children represented 59% of those seeing the campaign and report the following changes in their behavior: eating together more often (49%), purchasing more fruits and vegetables (44%), cooking more meals at home (42%), starting to plan meals (40%), and purchasing meal solutions (32%).
- The campaign also had a positive impression on households without children. In 2016, households without children represented 41% of those who saw the campaign. Of these households, 1/3 said they thought the campaign was a good concept. About a ¼ said it inspired more time together as a family and that they plan to purchase more fruits and vegetables after seeing the campaign.

## Consumer Research on Family Meals

### ► Overall Family Meals

Among all adults, only 59% of meals are eaten together, and the growth in alone eating outpaces the growth in single-person households.

SOURCE: FMI FOUNDATION, POWER OF FAMILY MEALS 2017: DESIRES, BARRIERS AND DIRECTIONS FOR SHARED MEALS AT HOME, 2017.

86% of parents who miss some dinners with their child during the week are taking specific steps to eat with their child more.

SOURCE: FMI FOUNDATION, POWER OF FAMILY MEALS 2017: DESIRES, BARRIERS AND DIRECTIONS FOR SHARED MEALS AT HOME, 2017.

Co-shopping is the "new normal" for American households. 84% of all U.S. adults say they have at least 50% of the household responsibility for grocery shopping (compared to 85% in 2016).

SOURCE: U.S. GROCERY SHOPPER TRENDS 2017, HARTMAN GROUP, 2017.

Lunchtime sees by far the lowest rate of successful "family meals at home": Lunch is prepared and eaten at home with others only 23% of the time. Families with children under 18 years can expect the children to be at school for the lunch half of the day during most of the year. When American adults do eat lunch at home, other family members are quite often absent.

SOURCE: U.S. GROCERY SHOPPER TRENDS 2017, FOOD MARKETING INSTITUTE (FMI), 2017.

Each day, 18% of dinners are eaten away from home, and of those eaten at home, 29% are eaten alone.

SOURCE: COMPASS EATING OCCASIONS 2014-2016. THE HARTMAN GROUP. ANALYSIS 2017.



Parents report taking many steps to eat with their children more often including: serving meals that they know their children enjoy (47%); making sure everyone is home at dinnertime (42%); having/sticking to a set dinnertime (34%); serving meals that are already made or require less time to prepare (28%); coming home from work earlier (18%).

SOURCE: FOOD MARKETING INSTITUTE. SHOPPING FOR HEALTH, 2016.

Parents estimate that they enjoy dinner with their children on average 4.7 times per week, about 10% less than they would like.

SOURCE: FOOD MARKETING INSTITUTE. SHOPPING FOR HEALTH, FOOD MARKETING INSTITUTE (FMI), 2016.

For 68% of consumers surveyed, dinner is the mealtime most of the people in the household eat together. 70% of the survey population said they usually or always eat the same things when they eat together.

SOURCE: THE HARTMAN GROUP. MODERN EATING: CULTURAL ROOTS, DAILY BEHAVIORS 2013.

63% of Americans decide what to eat less than an hour before eating.

SOURCE: THE HARTMAN GROUP. EATING OCCASIONS COMPASS 2013.

People are hungry for help in the kitchen. Shopper studies show that 81% of parents buy items with minimal prep time. Parents recognize and opt for convenience when time is limited. For many, convenience is as important as nutrition.

SOURCE: THE FOOD MARKETING INSTITUTE. FMI SHOPPING FOR HEALTH 2013. THE FOOD MARKETING INSTITUTE. FMI U.S. GROCERY SHOPPER TRENDS, 2014.

More men are cooking: The number of male primary grocery shoppers is 43%. Male shoppers are keeping pace with their female counterparts in number of visits to stores and in visits across channels. Sharing shopping roles means that more shoppers are making more trips to more stores.

SOURCE: THE FOOD MARKETING INSTITUTE. FMI SHOPPING FOR HEALTH 2013. THE FOOD MARKETING INSTITUTE. FMI U.S. GROCERY SHOPPER TRENDS, 2014.

In contrast to the relatively structured and uniform eating culture that the modern grocery store was first established to serve, today's eating is more dynamic, democratized, and influenced by multiple family members having a voice in what is eaten and prepared (31% of Millennials report sharing at least half of the responsibility for dinner preparation).

SOURCE: THE FOOD MARKETING INSTITUTE. FMI U.S. GROCERY SHOPPER TRENDS, 2014.

31% of Millennials report sharing at least half of the responsibility for dinner preparation.

SOURCE: THE FOOD MARKETING INSTITUTE. FMI U.S. GROCERY SHOPPER TRENDS 2014.

Cooking is no longer a gender-based tradition. The percentage of men who spent time cooking on any given day has jumped to 42%, as compared to 29% in 1965.

SOURCE: SMITH, L. TRENDS IN US HOME FOOD PREPARATION AND CONSUMPTION: ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL NUTRITION SURVEYS AND TIME USE STUDIES FROM 1965-1966 TO 2007-2008. NUTRITION JOURNAL, 2013.

#### ► Benefits of Home-prepared Meals

88% of U.S. adults say they eat healthier at home than when they are out.

SOURCE: FMI FOUNDATION, POWER OF FAMILY MEALS 2017: DESIRES, BARRIERS AND DIRECTIONS FOR SHARED MEALS AT HOME (2017).

Most adults enjoy food preparation.

SOURCE: THE POWER OF FRESH/PREPARED DELI, FOOD MARKETING INSTITUTE (FMI). 2016 AND FOODWAYS OF YOUNGER GENERATIONS: MILLENNIALS AND GEN Z. THE HARTMAN GROUP. 2016.

Preparing one's own food is believed to save money compared to eating out.

SOURCE: MODERN EATING: CULTURAL ROOTS, DAILY BEHAVIORS. THE HARTMAN GROUP, 2013.

81% percent of U.S. households cite home as the most popular location for eating dinner, and nearly half (50%) of consumers report eating dinner with everyone in their household every night of the week. Overall satisfaction was higher among those who made dinner at home compared to those who eat out or have take-out food at home.

SOURCE: THE NPD GROUP. DINNER TIME MEALSCAPE STUDY, 2009.

#### ► Benefits of Eating Together

When parents eat dinner alone, they find their own evening meal less satisfying.

SOURCE: THE HARTMAN GROUP. COMPASS EATING OCCASIONS 2014-2016, 2017.

Parents believe it is important to eat with their children and tend to want to eat with their children more. This is especially true for middle-aged fathers.

SOURCE: FOOD MARKETING INSTITUTE. SHOPPING FOR HEALTH, 2016.

86% of parents who miss some dinners with their child each week are taking specific steps to eat with their child more.

SOURCE: FOOD MARKETING INSTITUTE. SHOPPING FOR HEALTH, 2016.

When adults find themselves eating alone, they often report choosing restaurants or takeout because of the inefficiency of cooking for one. Conversely, preparing food to share among many eaters allows for economy of scale.

SOURCE: THE HARTMAN GROUP. MODERN EATING: CULTURAL ROOTS, DAILY BEHAVIORS, 2013.

### ► Barriers to Eating Together

Eating dinners together at home is both a priority and an ongoing challenge for large numbers of Americans: 71% of parents say that ideally they would like to eat dinner with their children every night.

SOURCE: FOOD MARKETING INSTITUTE. SHOPPING FOR HEALTH, 2016.

Adults believe that eating family meals is important, but family meals fail to occur as often as they succeed (50% of the time) in families with children under 18 years.

SOURCE: FOOD MARKETING INSTITUTE, U.S. GROCERY SHOPPER TRENDS, 2017.

## Quick Stats

- 81% of parents buy items with minimal prep time.

SOURCE: THE FOOD MARKETING INSTITUTE. FMI U.S. GROCERY SHOPPER TRENDS 2014.

- 63% of Americans decide what to eat less than an hour before eating.

SOURCE: THE HARTMAN GROUP. EATING OCCASIONS COMPASS 2013.

- 57% of people decide what's for dinner an hour before mealtime. 26% decided earlier that same day.

SOURCE: THE NPD GROUP. NATIONAL EATING TRENDS® 2012.

Today 42% of men are cooking as compared to 29% in 1965.

SOURCE: SMITH, L. (2013). TRENDS IN US HOME FOOD PREPARATION AND CONSUMPTION: ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL NUTRITION SURVEYS AND TIME USE STUDIES FROM 1965-1966 TO 2007-2008. NUTRITION JOURNAL, 12 (45).

- According to a 2013 Harris poll, only 30 percent of American families share dinner every night.

SOURCE: WOLFSON, J. AND BLEICH, S. (2014). IS COOKING AT HOME ASSOCIATED WITH BETTER DIET QUALITY OR WEIGHT-LOSS INTENTION? PUBLIC HEALTH NUTRITION, PUBLISHED ONLINE 17 NOVEMBER 2014.

Regarding schedules, adults are usually the problem with “dual incomes creating dueling schedules”. More than either parent would like, one of them usually misses family dinner. Fathers typically aspire to eat as many family dinners as mothers already do.

SOURCE: FOOD MARKETING INSTITUTE. SHOPPING FOR HEALTH, 2016.

- 68% of consumers say dinner is the mealtime most of the people in the household eat together.

SOURCE: THE HARTMAN GROUP. MODERN EATING: CULTURAL ROOTS, DAILY BEHAVIORS 2013.

- 70% of consumers say they usually or always eat the same things when they eat together.

SOURCE: THE HARTMAN GROUP. MODERN EATING: CULTURAL ROOTS, DAILY BEHAVIORS 2013.

- Sharing even one or two family meals per week as an adolescent is associated with lower rates of obesity in adulthood.

SOURCE: NEUMARK-SZTAINER, D. FAMILY MEALS AND ADOLESCENTS: WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM PROJECT EAT (EATING AMOUNT TEENS)? PUBLIC HEALTH NUTRITION, 13 (7), 2010.

For more information, see *The Power of Family Meals 2017: Desires, Barriers, and Directions for Shared Meals at Home*, 2017.

# STEP 2: Highlight Your Meal Services and Solutions

September is back-to-school time and time for families to establish new routines. It is the perfect time to position your brand as an essential ally for busy families and leverage the new school year to become an integral part of their new routine. By reminding families why and how your brand is investing in mealtime solutions for every family in the grocery aisles, you'll build customer loyalty and generate goodwill in your community.

Looking for ways to showcase the mealtime solutions you offer? The simplest way to build on the power of National Family Meals Month is to incorporate it into your existing programming. The next several pages contain activation ideas and thought starters on ways to integrate family meals content in social media, in-store promotions, and paid advertising.

## NATIONAL FAMILY MEALS MONTH™ ACTIVATION IDEAS

### On Your Website

- ▶ Create a National Family Meals Month™ “landing page” where you advertise the benefits of consuming one more meal together, as a family.
- ▶ Blog about National Family Meals Month™ during September.

### Social Media

#### Spread the family meals message in September with #familymealsmonth

- ▶ In September, and throughout the year, share research and quick statistics with your customers about the many ways children can benefit from eating meals together at home. Hashtag #familymealsmonth to let your customers know you're in support of families and National Family Meals Month™.
- ▶ Encourage customers to celebrate National Family Meals Month™ in September by incorporating one more family meal at home per week into their new school year routines. Spark conversation, ask customers to share how they're making more family meals happen at home, more often.
- ▶ Use the Raise Your Mitt To Commit logo provided in the toolkit as a call to action for customers. Encourage customers to engage on social media during National Family Meals Month™ by posting oven mitt selfies and taking the pledge to share one more family meal per week.
- ▶ Conduct contests designed to promote user-generated content and reward participants with prizes. Weekly contest idea: Each week during National Family Meals Month™ ask your customers to share photos of their favorite home-cooked family meal—breakfast, lunch or dinner—and share product coupons with those who



participate. Contest can also call for recipes, videos, a favorite family meal memory, or a fun fact about the impact that having regular family meals has had in their lives. Prizes may include: a cash reward, groceries for a week, branded oven mitt, or shout out on their submission by a celebrity.

- ▶ Share family meals themed promotions that highlight the meal solutions you offer every day to help busy customers honor their pledges to share one more family meal at home per week.
- ▶ Share National Family Meals Month™ recipes from your Web site designed to help families share one more meal at home per week.
- ▶ Partner with other National Family Meals Month™ participants to host a Twitter chat or series of chats designed to raise the awareness of the importance of family meals, share recipes/resources, and generate dialogue with the public.
- ▶ Partner with grocers to share family meals-themed promotions that highlight meal strategies to help busy consumers honor their pledges to share one more family meal at home per week. Knowing that many won't decide what they're eating for dinner until the hours immediately preceding mealtime, consider afternoon reminders, recipes, and prepared meal ideas.

- ▶ Partner with other National Family Meals Month™ participants to host a Facebook Live or Twitter chat or series of chats designed to raise the awareness of the importance of family meals, share recipes/resources, and generate dialogue with the public.
- ▶ Amplify social media content across multiple platforms including, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram, and Yummily. Add Yummily plug-ins to National Family Meals Month content.
- ▶ Encourage followers and fans to share facts, contests, recipes, and other content with their network, and across social media platforms, to showcase the importance and impact of family meals.
- ▶ Establish blogger relationships or leverage bloggers in your existing network to write about National Family Meals Month and link back to recipes, programs, contests, etc.

## For Employees

- ▶ Snap a group photo of your employees raising their oven mitts in commitment to helping families share one more family meal at home per week. Share their commitment with your customers using hashtag #familymealsmonth.
- ▶ Encourage your employees to Raise Your Mitt to Commit to share one more meal at home per week with their families by taking the social media, oven mitt selfie pledge.
- ▶ Gather employee testimonials about what one more family meal per week means to them. Share these testimonials with customers on social media.

## For Public Figures

- ▶ Ask celebrities, online influencers, and government officials to join in the National Family Meals Month™ celebration using the hashtag #familymealsmonth. Encourage them to take the social media, oven mitt selfie pledge to demonstrate their commitment to family and community. Remind them that family meals make families stronger, and strong families make healthy communities. Invite them to share a message about the importance of family meals in his or her own family.
- ▶ Engage RDs and other health professional groups to participate in National Family Meals Month by promoting it to their social networks and/or sharing their favorite family recipes or stories using #familymealsmonth.

## In-Store

Work with brokers and retailers to develop in-store promotions:

- ▶ Offer plug-and-play opportunities for your retail partners that do not have established family meal programs.
- ▶ Partner with a retailer to implement “Family Meal of the Week” promotions featuring your products.
- ▶ Have fun with the National Family Meals Month™ Raise Your Mitt to Commit pledge. In collaboration with a retail partner, reward customers, whose spending exceeds a predetermined dollar amount during the month of September, with a free oven mitt branded with both company logos and the National Family Meals Month™ logo. Each year, create a new mitt for loyal customers to collect.

## Partnerships

In the first several years of National Family Meals Month™ implementation, FMI has noted trends in implementation excellence. One of these is joining forces to collaboratively develop and execute programs for National Family Meals Month™. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts!

- ▶ Partner nationally with retailers and community health advocates.
  - » Plan ahead to cross-promote your mission, National Family Meals Month™ programming, and resources to all partner networks.
  - » Use your website, social media platforms, and in-store signage to feature a different food manufacturer every week, highlighting their offering (such as: ready-to-eat nutritious meal selections, frozen foods, meal kits, etc.) that help buyers participate in more family meals per week, despite their time constraints.
  - » Use your website, social media platforms, and in-store signage to feature a different community health advocate each week, highlighting them as a resource for mealtime strategies.





- ▶ Partner locally with organizations and businesses.
  - » Partner with local community centers and grocers to conduct cooking classes for the community. Feature “graduates” on social media raising their mitts to commit to one more family meal a week.
  - » Engage the community through partnerships with apartment complexes, homeowners associations, community centers, schools/PTA, youth sports clubs, etc.
  - » Create print resources to place in community centers, apartment complexes, doctor’s offices, and fitness facilities that show how you, as a brand committed to the overall wellness of its customers, can help families reap the multifaceted benefits of family meals, inviting individuals and families to your web resources for more information. Let your members and community know why you’re investing in providing more family meals solutions.
  - » Partner with local radio or TV stations to share mealtime solutions offered in partner stores that can help families enjoy mealtime together despite time constraints.
- ▶ Partner with your audience.
  - » Throughout National Family Meals Month™ feature “Family Meal of the Week” promotions that highlight families who have utilized strategies from your website or social media.

## Paid Advertising

- ▶ Go small or go big: simply place the National Family Meals Month™ icon, as appropriate, in your print media, broadcast ads, and coupon pages, or devote a Sunday insert to National Family Meals Month™. You’ll help bring attention to the benefits of family mealtime while positioning your company as a committed supporter of families and community.
- ▶ Bring the Raise Your Mitt to Commit pledge to print advertising and give a “mittful of savings” to customers during National Family Meals Month™. Feature the oven mitt selfies your customers upload to social media in your advertising to encourage even more customer engagement.

## Other

- ▶ Repurpose existing content (e.g., video, research, photography, celebrity endorsements, etc.) to promote family meals.
- ▶ Promote National Family Meals Month™ content in newsletters, published articles, and news releases.
- ▶ Show your commitment to National Family Meals Month™ at FMI Connect

## Best Practices

- ▶ Tag FMI in social media content for easy recognition and incorporation into National Family Meals Month™ metrics.
- ▶ Whether simply posting or hosting an online chat, use audience feedback prompts. Examples include: “Share a memory of your favorite family meal” or “Where is the most foreign or most unusual place your family has shared a meal?”
- ▶ Share success stories from current and previous National Family Meals Months™.
- ▶ Feature visually engaging content including photos and videos.
- ▶ Feature user-generated content.
- ▶ Feature real people and families (e.g., employees, customers, community members)
- ▶ Incorporate an interactive component into your programming, such as contests.
- ▶ Integrate omni-channel campaign tie-ins across social media and advertising platforms.
- ▶ Apply for a Gold Plate Award.

# STEP 3: Use National Family Meals Month™ Graphics

Participation can be as simple as incorporating the National Family Meals Month™ logo into your weekly sales flyer, social media channels and/or paid advertising.

Additionally, we know that you're committed to helping families get meals on the table 365-days a year. Therefore, we offer a variety of versions of the logo to be used in meal promotions throughout the year.

The following infographics can be used to illustrate the data on the benefits of family meals (download at: <https://www.fmi.org/family-meals/our-mission/supporting-research>):



Note that National Family Meals Month™ logos are adaptable for use across every category and in every department. Consider using them to promote meal-related products or integrating them into your store's shelf tag system as floor clings, door stickers, chalkboard art, signage on end-caps stocked full of meal-making ingredients, or put it on buttons for your associates to wear in-store.

# STEP 4: Encourage Your Customers to Participate

You can put National Family Meals Month™ on the map by spreading the message with hashtag **#familymealsmonth** and encouraging your customers to raise their oven mitts in commitment to sharing one more meal at home per week.

Use hashtag **#familymealsmonth** to help your brand get the attention and recognition it deserves. FMI will track engagement nationwide and curate content.

The following are sample posts and tweets that can be tailored to your company's unique voice.

## SAMPLE FACEBOOK POSTS

September is National Family Meals Month™. Let's celebrate by sharing one more family meal per week! Kids who eat with their families regularly are better nourished, have lower rates of obesity and do better in school. Easy A for family meals! **#familymealsmonth**

Busy schedules make family meal times challenging. September is National Family Meals Month™ so Raise Your Mitt to Commit to one more family meal per week - breakfast, lunch, dinner or snack time. We want to see you Raise Your Mitt to Commit to one more family meal per week. Show us your mitts! [link to resources or recipes on your website, or raise your mitt example] **#familymealsmonth**

What's your favorite family meal memory from childhood? Celebrate National Family Meals Month™ and create memories with your family. Make your kids' favorite meal. Make breakfast for dinner. Pack a sack lunch dinner. Have a picnic in your family room. **#familymealsmonth**

It's Family Meals Month™. Raise Your Mitt to Commit™ to one more shared meal occasion. Make breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, appetizers or late night munchies to enjoy with your family. We have what you need. **#familymealsmonth**

Like Comment Share

Make meals and memories during National Family Meals Month™. Raise Your Mitt to Commit to one more shared family meal this week. We've got solutions to help you. We want to see you Raise Your Mitt to Commit to one more family meal per week. Show us your mitts! (link to easy family meal recipes) **#familymealsmonth**

September is National Family Meals Month™. This month we focus on all the benefits of gathering the family around the table for a meal. We're all busy and getting a meal on the table can be stressful. What's your go-to family meal? Any tips? **#familymealsmonth**

Chances are your favorite childhood memories include meals and laughter around your family table. September is National Family Meals Month™. Raise Your Mitt to Commit to making one more family meal this week. **#familymealsmonth**

It's National Family Meals Month™. Do you need more help planning meals? Do you need easier recipes to get dinner on the table quicker? We can help. (link to planning and recipe resources on your website) **#familymealsmonth**

Like Comment Share

We believe in family meals. Research shows that home-cooked meals nourish the spirit, brain and health of all family members. And regular family meals are linked to higher grades and self-esteem for our children. What's your favorite meal to make for your family? **#familymealsmonth**

Study: With every additional family meal shared each week, adolescents are less likely to show symptoms of depression, less likely to use drugs and less likely to engage in risky behavior. We're here to help you get your family to the table. (link to recipes or meal planning ideas) **#familymealsmonth**

A recent study shows that children who grow up sharing meals as a family are more likely to exhibit positive behavior as adults, such as sharing, fairness and respect. What are your favorite family-time rituals around the table? **#familymealsmonth**

Study: Kids who share meals with their family three or more times per week are less likely to be overweight, more likely to eat healthy foods and less likely to have eating disorders. Commit to making one more family meal this week. **#familymealsmonth**

Like Comment Share

## SAMPLE FACEBOOK POSTS

Family meals have decreased one-third in the past 20 years, but the desire is still present: 90 percent of families wish they could have more meals together. We've got solutions to make it easier for you to gather around the table. (link to recipes and meal planning) #familymealsmonth

Like Comment Share

Research shows 81% of parents buy food with minimal prep time. We hear you. We've got quick and easy-to-prepare ideas for you. (link to products or recipes) Celebrate National Family Meals Month™. #familymealsmonth

September is National Family Meals Month™! We want to see photos of your family sharing a meal together. #familymealsmonth

September is National Family Meals Month™! We want to see you raise your mitt to commit to one more family meal per week. Show us your mitts! #familymealsmonth

Cooking trend: Parents want less prep time and less-clean-up because time is short. It's all about convenience. We've got quick and easy solutions for you (link to products, ideas, recipes) #familymealsmonth

Like Comment Share

## SAMPLE TWEETS

September is National Family Meals Month™ and we believe in the benefits of gathering families around the table. We're here to make it easier for you to share 1 more meal at home per week. From pre-prepped ingredients to meal kits, we've got you covered. #familymealsmonth

It's National Family Meals Month™. Have one more shared meal this week. Breakfast, dinner or snack time brings your family together. #familymealsmonth

Kids love to cook. It's National Family Meals Month™. Gather the ingredients to make a meal at home with your family. #familymealsmonth

It's National Family Meals Month™. Raise Your Mitt to Commit to one more shared meal at home with your family this week. #familymealsmonth

Gather around the table for National Family Meals Month™. A shared meal at home with your kids creates memories. #familymealsmonth

Reply Retweet Favorite More

Raise Your Mitt to Commit to one more family meal at home this week during National Family Meals Month™. #familymealsmonth

It's National Family Meals Month™! Share breakfast as a family this weekend. We've got all the ingredients. #familymealsmonth

We've got all the ingredients to help you make an easy family meal. Celebrate National Family Meals Month™ this week at home. #familymealsmonth

Shared family meals are the best. Raise Your Mitt to Commit to one more home cooked meal this week. #familymealsmonth

What's your favorite childhood family meal memory? Celebrate National Family Meals Month™ with your family & create new memories. #familymealsmonth

Reply Retweet Favorite More

What was the funniest thing that happened at school today? Ask this and other fun questions at the family table tonight. #familymealsmonth

Let the kids take over the kitchen tonight and make an easy family meal to celebrate National Family Meals Month™. #familymealsmonth

Family meals matter. Raise Your Mitt to Commit to one more shared family meal at home this week. #familymealsmonth

Sept is National Family Meals Month™. Snack time is a great and easy occasion to gather your family at home. #familymealsmonth

What was your favorite meal growing up? Make it for your family and celebrate National Family Meals Month™. #familymealsmonth

National Family Meals Month tip: Buy extra and save time by cooking one meal & using leftovers to create a second meal #familymealsmonth



## SAMPLE TWEETS

National Family Meals Month tip: Save time & prepare several dishes on Sun. Keep them in the fridge or freezer for the week ahead #familymealsmonth



Celebrate National Family Meals Month™. Let the kids choose their favorite meal and have them shop and cook with you. #familymealsmonth

September is National Family Meals Month. Celebrate football season with a family tailgate party. Invite neighbors and share dishes #familymealsmonth

We're here to help you with your family meal solutions. Need to make quicker meals? More nutritious meals? (link to solutions) #familymealsmonth



Back to school = Back to routine. Commit to getting your family back to the table for meal. #familymealsmonth



Research shows that home-cooked meals nourish the spirit, brain and health of all family members. We're here to help. #familymealsmonth

Family meals are linked to higher-grades and self-esteem, healthier eating habits and less risky behavior for our children. #familymealsmonth



Each add'l family meal shared per week, kids are less likely to show symptoms of depression and less likely to use drugs. #familymealsmonth

Study: Children who grow up sharing meals as a family are more likely to exhibit sharing, fairness and respect. #familymealsmonth

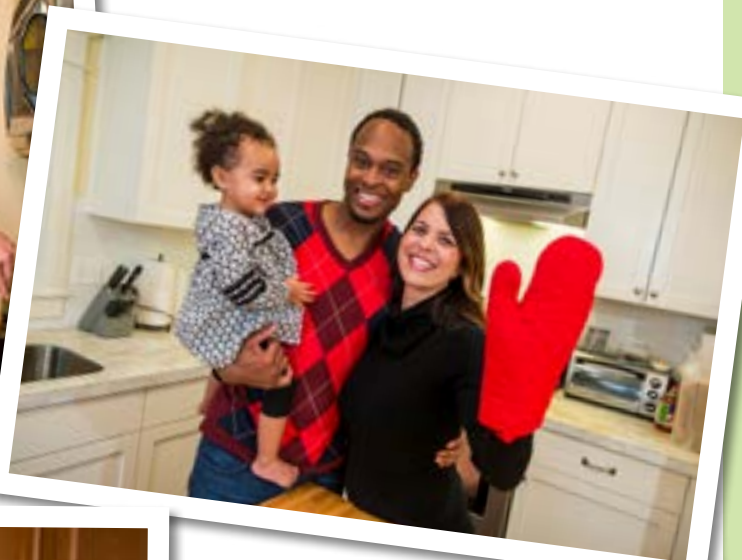
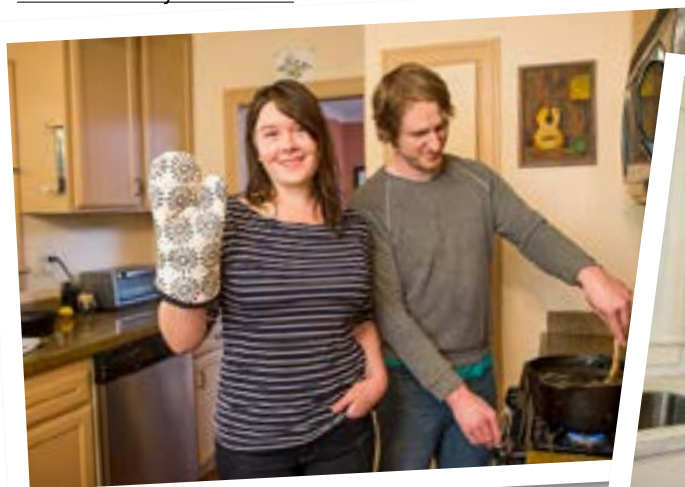
90% of families wish they could have more meals together. We're here to help. Commit to one more family meal this week. #familymealsmonth



Use the social media ideas above for fun ways to engage customers with oven mitt selfies and socialize National Family Meals Month™ with hashtag #familymealsmonth. You can get the Raise Your Mitt To Commit selfies trending by sharing these few photos on social media of real families raising their mitts to commit to one more meal at home per week. You have permission to use these photos in your promotion of National Family Meals Month™. Find online for download at: [www.fmifamilymeals.com](http://www.fmifamilymeals.com)

## RAISE YOUR MITT SELFIES

Use the social media ideas above for fun ways to engage customers with oven mitt selfies and socialize National Family Meals Month™ with hashtag **#familymealsmonth**. You can get the Raise Your Mitt To Commit selfies trending by sharing these few photos on social media of real families raising their mitts to commit to one more meal at home per week. You have permission to use these photos in your promotion of National Family Meals Month™. Find online for download at: [www.fmifamilymeals.com](http://www.fmifamilymeals.com)



# STEP 5: Include National Family Meals Month™ in Your Broadcast Messaging

## SAMPLE BROADCAST AND IN-STORE MESSAGING SCRIPTS

### 10 SECOND TAG

SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL FAMILY MEALS MONTH.  
RAISE YOUR OVEN MITT TO COMMIT TO ONE MORE  
FAMILY MEAL AT HOME PER WEEK – BECAUSE  
FAMILY MEALS MAKE FAMILIES STRONGER.

### 15 SECOND IN-STORE ANNOUNCEMENT

SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL FAMILY  
MEALS MONTH. (BRAND NAME)  
HAS SOLUTIONS TO HELP YOU  
GET A WHOLESOME FAMILY  
MEAL ON THE TABLE FASTER.  
RAISE YOUR OVEN MITT TO  
COMMIT TO ONE MORE FAMILY  
MEAL AT HOME PER WEEK -  
BECAUSE FAMILY MEALS MAKE  
FAMILIES STRONGER.

### 30 SECOND RADIO/PSA

IT'S SEPTEMBER - A NEW SCHOOL YEAR WITH NEW ROUTINES.  
SEPTEMBER IS ALSO NATIONAL FAMILY MEALS MONTH AND  
(BRAND NAME) BELIEVES IN THE BENEFITS OF GATHERING FAMILIES  
AROUND THE TABLE. WE'RE HERE TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR YOU TO  
SHARE ONE MORE MEAL AT HOME PER WEEK. WHETHER YOU NEED  
A READY-TO-GO MEAL OR PRE-PREPARED INGREDIENTS TO GET A  
MEAL ON THE TABLE FASTER – (BRAND NAME) HAS A SOLUTION  
FOR MANIC MEALTIME. DURING NATIONAL FAMILY MEALS MONTH  
WE INVITE YOU TO RAISE YOUR OVEN MITT TO COMMIT TO ONE  
MORE FAMILY MEAL AT HOME PER WEEK – BECAUSE FAMILY MEALS  
MAKE FAMILIES STRONGER.

# Press Release

YOUR LOGO HERE

For Immediate Release

Media Contact: PR contact's name

(xxx) xxx-xxxx, youremail@company.com

## **[YOUR ORGANIZATION'S NAME] Participates in National Family Meals Month™: Families Win!**

*Numerous studies show that home-cooked meals nourish the spirit, brain and health of all family members.*

YOUR CITY, STATE – September, day, 2018 – What is a better cause than helping families gather around the table together more often? Not only does it sound like a good idea, but studies show extensive nutrition, social, and mental benefits associated with family meals and these apply to the whole family unit. That's why [name of company], has committed to being an active participant in the family meals movement, joining close to 200 grocery retailers, food manufacturers, and community organizations in providing solutions, tips, support, and encouragement to consumers in an effort to help them enjoy one more meal together per week.

People are hungry for help in the kitchen and [name of the company] is here for our customers. We aim to spread the word about National Family Meals Month™ and lend support to help families eat more meals together—because we know it works. Research conducted in 2016 shows that 85% of shoppers said they took action after seeing the National Family Meals Month™ campaign.<sup>1</sup>

“The Food Marketing Institute is in a position to bring together those on the front lines—grocery retailers, food manufacturers, and community groups—as part of a shared purpose to encourage and facilitate family meals. Together we can do well by doing good,” said Leslie Sarasin, president and CEO of the Food Marketing Institute, creator of National Family Meals Month™. “In just three short years, we have seen the family meals movement grow and inspire shoppers to action—and we have only just begun.”

“Family meals have been on the decline, as many struggle to balance busy schedules and scramble for time to prepare and eat together,” said [company spokesperson, title]. “The more convenient, and healthy, solutions we can offer, the easier it will be for our customers to return to the table and reap the benefits of doing so.”

Utilize the following resources to learn more and start a family meal journey: [Supplement with your brand's offerings (e.g. Products, shortcuts, programs) and link to your National Family Meals Month™ “landing page” of online resources.]]

### **Raise Your Mitt to Commit™ to One More Meal at Home per Week**

[Company name] is encouraging the community to join the National Family Meals Month™ movement by pledging to one more meal at home per week. Make it official, and shareable, by posting a selfie wearing your favorite oven mitt with the hashtag #familymealsmonth. Follow [Company name] on Facebook and Twitter to join the conversation this September.

### **About National Family Meals Month™**

As the voice of food retail, the Food Marketing Institute Foundation created National Family Meals Month™ as a nationwide, annual event to raise awareness of the benefits of frequent family meals, while highlighting grocers and manufacturers with the support of community health organizations, as the solution for families to share one more meal at home per week.

About [your company]

Insert your standard boilerplate here.

###

‘Source Note: Nielsen. National Family Meals Month: Campaign Results, 2016. Accessed at: <https://www.fmi.org/family-meals/our-mission/consumer-impact>.



# Newsletter/Blog Content

## Let [NAME OF COMPANY] Be Your Mealtime Ally!

Do you strive to eat more meals together, as a family, but then life gets in the way? Currently, adults say they eat about 59% of their meals together.<sup>1</sup> Parents, specifically, express wanting to do so more. Among parents who say they miss some dinners during the week, 86% say they are taking steps to eat with their child more.<sup>1</sup>

Eating together is worth the effort. Family mealtime is associated with physical, social, and mental health benefits. In fact, regular family meals are linked to the kinds of outcomes that we all want for our children: higher grades and self-esteem, healthier eating habits, and less risky behavior. And eating at home can be a win-win for both your pocketbook and your waistline, with research showing that people who eat more home-cooked meals consume about 130 fewer calories per day, on average.<sup>2</sup>

[Name of company] has committed to being an active part of the National Family Meals Month™ movement because the health and well-being of you and your family is important to us. We understand that family meals are important, but that lives are also busy. We understand that responsibilities to balance and competing priorities can thwart even the best of intentions. Luckily, we have the expertise, tools, and resources to support you in making more family meals a reality.

Start now with the following steps!

1. **Be committed.** Pledge to Raise Your Mitt to Commit to sharing one more meal together at home per week.
2. **Be resourceful.** Visit [insert link] to find [insert types of materials].
3. **Be social.** Follow us on Facebook and Twitter for family meals focused content, including shopping tips and recipes. [insert company social media handles].
4. **Be engaged.** Share your own family meal experiences, misadventures, and solutions within your social channels. Remember to use the hashtag #familymealsmonth to be part of the conversation!

Sources:

<sup>1</sup> FMI Foundation. Power of Family Meals 2017: Desires, Barriers and Directions for Shared Meals at Home, 2017. Accessed at: [https://www.fmi.org/docs/default-source/familymeals/fmi-power-of-family-meals-whitepaper-for-web.pdf?sfvrsn=13d87f6e\\_2](https://www.fmi.org/docs/default-source/familymeals/fmi-power-of-family-meals-whitepaper-for-web.pdf?sfvrsn=13d87f6e_2)

<sup>2</sup> Wolfson, J. and Bleich, S. Is cooking at home associated with better diet quality or weight-loss intention? Public Health Nutrition, 2014.

# STEP 6: Join With Other Food Manufacturers for the Greater Good

Getting families to commit to sharing one more meal at home per week benefits everyone. And success hinges on participation by members like you. Prepared meals and pre-prepped ingredients are driving profits and customer loyalty. Participation in the broader movement positions your brand as an extension of the family unit and as a problem solver. It also highlights your investment in meal-focused programs, and health and wellness.

Consider collaborating with other manufacturers to create a co-op FSI promoting the benefits of family meals during National Family Meals Month™. Individually and collectively, you have the influence and reach to make National Family Meals Month™ a national event and bring families back to the table.

# STEP 7: Communicate the Value of Ongoing Participation in National Family Meals Month™ within Your Company

The following contains questions and answers that can be used to answer inquiries within your company and beyond.

**What is National Family Meals Month™?** The FMI Foundation has proclaimed September National Family Meals Month™. This nationwide industry initiative is designed to promote the role FMI members play in helping busy families eat at home together more often. As a prominent food manufacturer, National Family Meals Month™ provides you with a new, creative opportunity to collaborate with grocers to bolster your promotion of meal-focused products and stimulate sales.

**Why Family meals?** Numerous studies show that preparing and sharing meals at home make families and kids stronger and healthier. We believe that no one is better equipped to help families get wholesome meals on the table than the food industry! National Family Meals Month™ provides a platform for brands to collaborate with grocers to rally families to commit to sharing one more meal per week, and remind them that simple, healthy mealtime solutions can be found in every supermarket aisle.

**What is the call to action?** Through campaign messaging and engagement tools, FMI Members will encourage shoppers to commit to sharing one more family meal at home per week. In September, as kids head back to school and parents adjust their routines to accommodate fall activities, we want families to commit to making mealtime a priority. Trusted brands like yours, together with grocers, can show them how.

**Why should we participate?** This event positions manufacturers and grocers as problem-solvers, and offers an additional opportunity to highlight how the food industry is investing in mealtime solutions to meet consumer demand in a changing food environment. Once a daily tradition, family meals are at a critical intersection in our nation today. The desire to return to the table exists, but families need a friendly, familiar voice to show them the way. That voice is food manufacturer, in collaboration with their grocer. More than 76% of people report that conflicting schedules are a primary barrier to cooking and eating together on a regular basis. <sup>1</sup> People are hungry for help in the kitchen. <sup>2</sup>

**How will participating in National Family Meals Month™ benefit our company?** Leverage National Family Meals Month™ to remind shoppers and the larger community that your company advocates for families every day by offering mealtime solutions that help them get wholesome meals on the table so they can reap the benefits of family mealtime. Positioning your company within the community as an extension of the family unit and part of the solution generates consumer trust and customer loyalty, both of which are great for business.

**What resources are available?** FMI offers a National Family Meals Month™ toolkit featuring downloadable materials to make this a “plug-and-play” marketing concept that complements what you’re already doing to promote mealtime solutions. The overarching messages and visuals are customizable to fit brands’ needs and can be tailored to a brand’s distinct voice. We provide graphics, social media content, and inspiration for in-store activation, POS and advertising to all FMI members at no cost. The theme is flexible and perfect for end caps and in-store product displays. Incorporate family meal messaging and deals into FSIs, promote it through your social media channels and share with your community through PR. FMI food manufacturer members looking to introduce a family meals program can find additional resources and inspiration in the [“Best Practices and Excellence in National Family Meals Month”](#).

**Besides promoting National Family Meals Month™ to customers, how else can we participate?** We ask that you share and discuss this initiative with both your colleagues and grocery partners. Meals at home are good for families and great for our industry. Through National Family Meals Month™ in September, we want to bring FMI members from coast to coast together to share the industry’s message about the importance of eating family meals together at home.

Sources:

<sup>1</sup> 2014 FGI Research commissioned by The Monday Campaign

<sup>2</sup> The Hartman Group

# STEP 8: Be Recognized and Celebrate!

Momentum continues to grow among food industry members around the National Family Meals Movement and companies are committing their support to National Family Meals Month! Is your company present in the dialogue?

## Featuring: 2017 Gold Plate Winners



The Gold Plate Awards highlight outstanding programs that have implemented to encourage families to share more meals, together at home, more often. We also honor the contributions companies are making to help raise consumer awareness of the many benefits of family meals.



### Skogen's Festival Food: Festival Family Meals

*Retailer Category A (1-99 stores)*

Skogen's Festival Foods – Festival Foods successfully created a comprehensive omnichannel campaign to promote National Family Meals Month through their \$10 Meals program. Their 360-degree approach involved meeting guests, associates and consumers in the stores where they shop, on social media, via traditional media as well as during presentations in the community. Festival Foods collaborated with industry partners to spread the family meals message including the American Heart Association; Fruits & Veggies – More Matters; area celebrities from The Better Half (a lifestyle TV show hosted by wives of Green Bay Packers players); a statewide radio show Wilde & Tausch on ESPN; and with local WFRV-TV's morning talk show. Grocery store tours were offered throughout the month in partnership with healthcare systems, community groups and universities. The campaign produced measurable results, including 418 guests redeeming a family meals month offer from their mobile text club over the course of two days.

### Spartan Nash

*Retailer Category B (100-199 stores)*

SpartanNash celebrated family meals across their with a comprehensive and creative omnichannel experience. They used print advertisements, online blog content, social media content and the National Family Meals Month logo on produce sign inserts. In-store, store associates offered families seen shopping together oven mitts, cans of Our Family soup, and a flier about National Family Meals Month. Community outreach included food demos, cooking classes and a health fair in partnership with the YMCA, healthcare store tours and state grant funded partner events. In-store associates were invited to participate in a video about their favorite family meals moments and corporate-level employees received National Family Meals Month information through the employee health and wellness program. The SpartanNash campaign reached over 5 million people through social networks and various ads.

### The Kroger Co.

*Retailer Category C (200+ stores)*

Kroger's National Family Meals Month campaign reached over 1 million shoppers through a mixture of omnichannel engagements. Their campaign had a strong focus on their registered dietitians (RDs) and Little Clinic solutions and included a Twitter Chat with Little Clinic RDs; a Facebook Live education series by Little Clinic RDs; in-clinic education by clinicians and pharmacists utilizing a National Family Meals Month educational brochure; a live TV broadcast with an RD highlighting Kroger's offerings for nutritious and timely family meals; in-store nutrition outreach; free RD personal shopping services; and an "Inspired Gathering" page on Kroger.com featuring numerous National Family Meals Month recipes, family meal conversation starters, clean-up tips and educational resources (i.e., teaching kids to set the table).





## Associated Wholesale Grocers

### *Wholesaler Category*

Associated Wholesale Grocers' (AWG) campaign included collaboration between all AWG brands (Best Choice, Clearly Organic, Superior Selections, and Always Save), which published educational content on all brands' social media pages and websites. All brands fully adopted the National Family Meals Month theme for September, changing website sliders, social media profile pictures, and cover photos to display National Family Meals Month messaging. All AWG retailers were informed of the campaign and encouraged to share materials with their consumers. Internally, employees were educated on the benefits of family meals with announcements on company TVs.

## The Campbell Soup Company

### *Food Manufacturer Category*

The Campbell Soup Company's Helping Families Eat Together program included a partnership with a national food retail chain, employee engagement and saw sales increase on promoted products. In addition to using omnichannel tactics, Campbell produced a heartwarming digital ad featuring one of their product lines and the importance of eating together. Collaboration with a national retailer and the Retail Dietitians Business Alliance provided solutions to common barriers of eating meals together. Internally, Campbell's Global Nutrition team and Consumer Test Kitchens partnered to promote National Family Meals Month and reached 10,000 employees across the company with weekly nutritious recipes and family meal solutions. Most impressively, over 130,000 coupons and handouts distributed with the National Family Meals Month logo and Pace Salsa mealtime recipe inspiration resulted in a 4 percent increase in Pace Salsa sales.

## The American Heart Association

### *Allied Group Category*

The American Heart Association's Healthy For Good™: Eat Smart and Add Color campaign sought to help people make simple, healthy decisions while creating sustainable habits. Campaign communications like a Healthy For Good e-newsletter pointed to a custom landing page with family meal resources. Consumers were encouraged to create their own "Recipe Box" online to start saving healthy meals for National Family Meals Month. The campaign leveraged multiple national and local American Heart Association social media channels and digital networks to spread the National Family Meals Month message, reaching approximately 1 million consumers.

## 2017 Gold Plate Honorable Mentions

Baesler's Market - Make Meal Time Family Time (with Help from Baesler's)

Coborn's, Inc. - Coborn's Celebrates National Family Meals Month

Hannaford Supermarkets - Time-Saving Meals from Your Hannaford Dietitian/Good Ideas for Busy Families

Tops Friendly Markets - #FamilyMealsMonth

Hy-Vee, Inc. - Hy-Vee, Inc.'s National Family Meals Month Campaign

W. Lee Flowers and Co., Inc. - IGA Raise Your Mitt to Commit Family Photo Contest

The Coca-Cola Company - The Coca-Cola Family Meals Program