

# UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL OF FOOD

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## THE POTENTIAL TO BRING US TOGETHER

**Enjoy the benefits of bringing families and friends together with food.**

Nutrition Month 2018 features the potential of food to fuel, discover, prevent, heal and bring us together -- with the help of dietitians. [Visit NutritionMonth2018.ca](http://NutritionMonth2018.ca)

Canadians are busy! In a recent Ipsos poll, 30 per cent of Canadians said it's challenging to find time to eat meals with friends and family. But, it's important to share meals, because it opens dialogue, connects people and helps us eat a more balanced diet. It's an enriching experience for people of all ages to share meals -- from children to older adult. This Nutrition Month, dietitians want to remind you of the power of coming together for shared meals.

## WHY SHARE MEALS WITH OTHERS?

The biggest barriers to eating together are busy schedules like work and evening activities. It takes creativity to balance busy schedules, but it's worth the effort because everyone benefits when you eat in the company of others!

- Children who eat with their family have more nutritious diets, better academic performance, a lower risk for being overweight and less risk of eating disorders. Plus, children tend to have increased intake of vegetables and fruit, and a decreased intake of sugar-sweetened beverages.
- Teens who share family meals get better grades, and are less likely to smoke, use drugs or alcohol, or to participate in serious fights.



DIETITIAN PRO TIP

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Twelve per cent of Canadians say they look at texts or emails during meals. In our home, we have a "no phones at the table" policy so we can focus on each other's company, sharing highlights from our day. It also allows us time to focus on and enjoy what we're eating, instead of what our friends on Instagram or Snapchat are eating!

## TRY THIS!



**Spiced chia pudding**



**Lemony roasted potato & avocado salad**



**Easy chicken curry**

Find all 15 feature recipes at [www.NutritionMonth2018.ca](http://www.NutritionMonth2018.ca)



Track eating and activity on the go with **eaTracker**.  
Get inspired with recipe ideas from **Cookspiration**.



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- Adults who eat with friends and family tend to eat more vegetables and fruits, drink less pop, eat fewer meals at fast food restaurants, and have lower body mass indexes.
- Older adults who eat as part of a group have better diets, improved nutrient intake and lower rates of malnutrition.
- People who come together in communities can eat together at community kitchens, where they learn to cook, share meals, try new foods, have fun and learn about nutrition.

## START A CONVERSATION

For many people, sharing meals is a favourite time of day to interact with family and friends. It allows people to connect share traditions, learn, communicate and listen. If you are new to family meals, here are some Do's and don'ts:

1. DO give everyone at the table a chance to speak.
2. DON'T use it as a time to scold or discipline picky eaters.
3. DO ask questions that require more than a "yes" or "no" answer. So, instead of "did you have a good day?" try asking "tell me something interesting that happened today."

Sharing family meals doesn't only mean dinner! If your evening schedule is hectic, share breakfast meals or have brunch together on the weekends. Most studies done on the benefits of family meals start with sharing at least four meals together per week. They all count!

## WANT TO UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL OF FOOD?

**TALK TO A DIETITIAN!**

Dietitians are passionate about the potential of food to enhance lives and improve health. We will work with you to embrace food, understand it and to enjoy it while considering your overall objectives, needs and challenges. We look beyond fads and gimmicks to deliver reliable, life-changing advice.

Find a dietitian at [www.dietitians.ca/find](http://www.dietitians.ca/find).

Find all 5 fact sheets at [www.NutritionMonth2018.ca](http://www.NutritionMonth2018.ca)

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