

Family Meals Keep Kids Healthy

(NAPSA)—The average family meal lasts just 20 minutes, but research clearly shows that sharing regular meals can have significant benefits for children of all ages. Family meals have the potential to reduce the risk of substance abuse, obesity and eating disorders, and can improve kids' eating habits.

Many families struggle to find time to gather around the table every night, juggling work, household chores and other activities. Other challenges, such as sibling conflict, can interfere with the quality of family mealtimes. The Pampered Chef®, the largest direct seller of kitchen tools, knows that a meal plan is more than just a recipe and a grocery list. They partnered with the Family Resiliency Center at the University of Illinois to develop strategies to help families make mealtimes easier.

They offer these suggestions:

- Get the kids involved. Include them in mealtime planning by giving them specific, age-appropriate tasks such as setting the table. Plus, let them choose one weekly meal.

- Teach children how to stop, think and talk when they get into disagreements.

- Keep it engaging. Telling stories during mealtimes helps children understand family values and traditions.

- Make mealtime simple. Choose easy, budget-friendly meals that allow you to spend less time cooking and more time with your family, such as this dinner recipe developed by the Test Kitchen experts at The Pampered Chef, for around \$2 per serving:

For more family meal recipes that cost around \$2 per serving, visit www.pamperedchef.com.



Regular family meals, research suggests, can boost children's health and well-being, reducing the likelihood that they'll become obese or use drugs, and increase the chances that they'll do well in school.

Harvest Pasta Skillet

- 1 large onion
- 8 oz white mushrooms
- ½ tbsp olive oil
- 1 can (15 oz) solid pack pumpkin
- 4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- ¾ cup dry white wine, such as Chardonnay
- ½ cup water
- 5 garlic cloves, pressed
- 3 Tbsp Moroccan rub
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 pkg (14.5 oz) uncooked protein-enriched multigrain penne pasta
- ¼ cup shelled pistachios
- ½ cup heavy whipping cream
- 1 oz Parmesan cheese
- Coarsely ground black pepper and chopped fresh parsley (optional)

Thinly slice onion using Simple Slicer on No. 2 setting. Cut onion slices in half with Chef's Knife. Slice mushrooms using Egg Slicer Plus®. Heat oil in (12-in) skil-

let over medium-high heat 3 minutes or until simmering. Add onion and mushrooms. Cook and stir 3 minutes or until onion is translucent. Meanwhile, combine pumpkin, broth, wine and water in Classic Batter Bowl; whisk well using Stainless Whisk. Add garlic pressed with Garlic Press, rub and salt to skillet; cook 20 seconds or until fragrant. Stir in pumpkin mixture. Bring to a simmer; stir in pasta. Reduce heat to medium; cover and cook 11 minutes or until pasta is tender, stirring occasionally. Coarsely chop pistachios using Food Chopper. Turn off burner; stir in cream. Grate cheese over pasta mixture using Rotary Grater. Sprinkle with pistachios. Garnish with black pepper and parsley, if desired.

Yield: 8 servings

For free mealtime resources, including downloadable conversation starters, visit pamperedchef.com/mealtimeminutes.