



Take the Mindful Mealtimes Pledge

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Many of us make resolutions to eat healthier at the start of the year. However, you and your family can make a commitment to healthier, happier mealtimes at any time of the year. Just use our “Mindful Mealtimes Pledge” and get started today. Review the pledge together. Once everyone has decided to join, make it official and let everyone sign the bottom. Even your youngest eater can make a mark to show they are involved! Lastly, display your signed pledge where everyone can see it, like on the fridge, so that you are reminded of the family commitment you made. Here are some of the highlights of the Mindful Mealtime pledge that can get you on the road to healthier, happier mealtimes:

1. Commit to Cooking: Encourage cooking and eating together. While that may not be possible every night, start small and set your sites at doing a little more cooking than you usually do. Start by scheduling a once-a-week family cooking night where everyone cooks and eats together. If you commit to making extra food on that night then you may even have healthy, home-cooked leftovers to eat together on a busier night the same week.

2. Encourage Practice : Foster an adventurous approach to food. Kids need a lot of practice with food in order to expand their food preferences. That means trying foods that may be unfamiliar and practicing foods that are not their favorite. Remember, the way kids learn to love foods is to keep practicing so that their sense of taste and their food preferences evolve. We can encourage them by establishing a low-key rule about everyone taking “practice bites.” You might even call these tastes “exploring bites” or “adventure bites” to make it fun. Even grownups can try new foods and practice foods that aren't their favorite, and modeling this can be very helpful for children. Rotate new foods and recipes into your repertoire to keep up the adventurous spirit and show you are willing to try new things, too!

3. Enjoy Mealtimes: Take time to enjoy the conversation of mealtime without worrying too much about nutrition. Put screens and other devices away to make it easier for everyone to be engaged. Make mealtime a little bit special by lighting a candle or putting out cloth napkins. Don't worry about how many vegetables everyone is eating, and instead savor the protected family time you are creating. Healthy habits will come with time!

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Mindful Mealtimes Pledge

Our family will pledge to make mealtimes a priority so we can be healthier and happier. We pledge to:

- Plan, prepare and enjoy more meals together as a family.
- Take a mindful approach to food and what it does to strengthen our bodies.
- Be curious and be open to trying new foods, even if we are not sure we will like them.
- Be patient and encouraging with family members who are learning about new foods.
- Take an exploring bite of new foods so we learn to like them.
- Spend less energy thinking and worrying about nutrition during mealtimes.
- Focus on family conversations and sharing time together during mealtime.
- Make mealtimes a screen-free zone where we can practice mindfulness and family connection.

signed by all family members:

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