



# Food and Fitness



January 2009

Sometimes, a seemingly simple act can have a profound impact on overall health and well-being. Family meal-times are about much more than just eating food together. Long-standing research shows that enjoying more meals as a family offers numerous health benefits – physical, mental and emotional – to children. The benefits come when family mealtimes are **positive** experiences. There are few if any benefits from a rushed family meal where parents lecture, the kids sulk, and everyone is angry at the end of the meal. Family meals have a positive effect on nutrition. Eating more family meals is associated with a higher intake of fruits, vegetables, grains, and calcium-rich foods, as well as lower soft drink intake. Teens who eat more family meals have higher intakes of key nutrients like calcium, iron, vitamins A,C, E, B and foliate, as well as fiber.

Research suggests that five or more family meals per week are probably best for kids. Families can enjoy healthful meals together morning, noon, or night – at home, in a restaurant, or on a picnic. Eating together does not mean a perfect family every night of the week – nor that parents have to feel guilty when schedules seem too crazy for everyone to sit down together. Like anything else worth having in life, eating meals as a family gets better with practice.

## For Questions About...

Polk County  
Congregate Meals  
515-286-2062

Commodity &  
Supplemental Foods  
515-286-3655

Nutrition, Food  
Preparation &  
Food Safety  
ISU AnswerLine  
1-800-262-3804

A HAPPY  
NEW YEAR

### We Get Questions

*How many different kinds of fats are there?*

There are four major fats in the foods we eat: saturated fats, trans fats, monounsaturated fats and polyunsaturated fats. The four types have different chemical structures and physical properties. The bad fats, saturated and trans fats, tend to be more solid at room temperature (like a stick of butter), while monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats tend to be more liquid (like liquid vegetable oil).

Fats can also have two different effects on the cholesterol levels in your body. The bad fats, saturated and trans fats, raise bad cholesterol (LDL) levels in your blood. Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats don't seem to raise bad cholesterol levels and are beneficial when consumed in moderation.

There are nine calories in every gram of fat, regardless of what type of fat it is.

*Source: American Heart Association*

**What's in Your Work Place**  
**Vending Machines?**



Food is everywhere we go, all day, every day. With many people struggling to control their weight in our food filled surroundings, it's good to have some healthier choices available. So here are some tips for stocking a healthy vending machine in your work place environment.

- Baked or reduced fat chips
- Reduced fat cookies and crackers
- Fig bars
- Pretzels
- Canned Fruit (lite or packed in own juice)
- Animal crackers
- Popcorn (lite or low-fat – 5g. or less per serving)
- Graham Crackers
- Granola Bars Cereal Bars
- In the refrigerated units
- 100 % fruit juice or vegetable juice
- Yogurt (low-fat or fat-free)
- Reduced- fat cottage cheese or pudding
- Fresh fruit
- Mini carrots or other pre-packaged vegetables
- Salads with low-fat; non-fat dressing choices
- Bottled water

**Your Favorite Food - Is It Worth It?**

	Calories	Miles of walking by:	
		Person 150 lb.	Person 175 lb.
Krispy Crème® 1 glazed, cream Filled doughnut	340	3.4	2.9
M&M's® 1.69 oz.	230	2.3	2.0
Large French Fries	520	5.1	4.4
Quarter pound Hamburger	430	4.3	3.7
Snickers® bar, 2.07 ounces	280	2.8	2.4

**Money Saving Tip**

Build up a repertoire of dishes without meat; and serve them a couple times a week. Meat is expensive, and isn't necessary every day. A couple of great meatless dinners are vegetable omelets and bean tostadas. Take a corn tortilla, heat, add refried beans, and then lettuce, cheese, green onions, and tomatoes. It's easy and inexpensive.

**7 Layer Hot Dish**

Potatoes	1/2 lb. ground meat
Onions	1 can green beans
Carrots	1 can tomato soup
1/2 cup uncooked rice	1 cup hot water or milk

Wash and slice fresh vegetables. Line bottom of a greased casserole with potatoes. Then layer in this order: onions, carrots, rice, meat, green beans, and soup (mixed with 1 can water or milk). Bake at 325 degrees for 2 hours or cook on top of stove at medium heat until rice is cooked. For a quicker meal, boil rice before making the casserole. Bake or cook for 30-45 minutes.



**Food Assistance—Only 72% of Iowans eligible for Food Assistance or food stamps are receiving the program. If you have not applied and need help to feed you or your family call.**

**1-877– YES—FOOD**

Prepared by  
 Susan B. Klein,  
 ISU Extension Nutrition & Health  
 Field Specialist

with assistance from  
 Barb Anderson,  
 ISU Extension Nutrition & Health  
 Field Specialist

Printing provided by Polk County  
 Board of Supervisors.

**IOWA STATE  
 UNIVERSITY**  
 University Extension

... and justice for all  
 The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Many materials can be made available in alternative formats for ADA clients. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964.