

FAMILY DINNERS

**Extension Tip of the Week
November 24, 2008**

According to the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, the more often children and teens eat dinner with their families, the less likely they are to smoke, drink or use drugs. Compared to kids who have fewer than three family dinners per week, children and teens who have frequent family dinners are:

1. At 70% lower risk for substance abuse
2. Half as likely to try cigarettes
3. Half as likely to be cigarette smokers
4. Half as likely to try marijuana
5. One third less likely to try alcohol
6. Half as likely to get drunk monthly
7. Likelier to get better grades in school
8. Less likely to have friends who drink alcohol and use marijuana
9. Likelier to have parents who take responsibility for teen drug use
10. Almost 40 percent likelier to say future drug use will never happen

There it is--a list of 10 reasons to have family meals. Combine these reasons with the cost savings and nutritional advantage of home cooked meals, and family mealtime becomes a win-win event