

## **The Importance of Family Mealtime**

Eating dinner together every night keeps the doors of communication open. It's the perfect time and place for parents to reconnect and to show their kids that they are their priority. Sitting across the table is where and when parents can find out more about their children's likes, dislikes, and daily life. Having this information can help parents direct their children toward positive activities and behavior, reducing the likelihood that they will get involved with alcohol, tobacco, and/or illegal drugs.

Compared to teens that have frequent family dinners, those who rarely have family dinners are three-and-a-half times more likely to have abused prescription drugs or an illegal drug other than marijuana.

Girls who have five or more meals a week with their families are one-third less likely to develop unhealthy eating habits, which can range from skipping meals to full-fledged anorexia or abusing diet pills.

The importance of regular family activities to share ideas and find out "what's happening" is a great way for a parent to be involved, discuss rules, monitor activities and friends, and be a good role model. The benefits of eating together will last long after their meal ends, especially if family mealtimes become a regular activity.

Adapted from [www.theantidrug.com](http://www.theantidrug.com)

For more information or other topics related to substance use or abuse, call Jessica Wildfong, Prevention Services Coordinator at 781-275-7727 or stop by the office in Town Center, 12 Mudge Way.