

Family Health

Making Time for Each Other

Focus on Family Time

No matter what “family” means for you, the time you spend with people you care about is vital to your emotional health. Trust and companionship simply makes everyone feel better—it’s shown to boost happiness and sense of purpose, discourage unhealthy lifestyle habits, help cope with trauma and increase self-worth.

For kids, this is even more important. Physical activity is great for their health, and active time with family also helps them discover new interests, develop social skills and learn about the world around them. But life is so busy it can be hard to carve out time together, even when you have the best intentions.

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Your July Activity: Family Togetherness

Get together with those closest to you to learn, laugh and grow together as you complete different family activities each week.



How to Make Family Time a Habit

Limit Screen Time

Watching favorite shows together is a healthy way to bond, but it’s not the only way. Turn off the TV, put down the glowing cell phone screens and make sure your family activities include being up, active and interested in what’s going on around you.

Set Specific Time to Spend Together

And make it a point to follow through. Consistency makes it easier to get everyone involved, aids in planning and simply makes family night more likely to happen on a regular basis.

Have a Backup Plan

A little rain can change your day in a hurry — so make sure you have an indoor backup plan.

Try New Things and Let Everyone Plan

It will be difficult to look forward to family night if you fall into a rut. To keep things interesting, mix in new activities with those you regularly enjoy and let everyone take turns choosing what to do. You’ll learn about each other as you develop new skills!

Be Thrifty

Don’t add stress by making every family night involve expensive activities, gifts or meals. The time you spend together is the important thing, so find games you can play with items you already have around, or get creative and use your imagination.

Kids' Sports: Follow the Safety Playbook

Sports are a great way to have fun and develop a bond with kids, and the active time spent playing and practicing is a benefit to their health. But if you don't take the right precautions, injuries can easily occur. Don't let a bad bounce or poor planning discourage your kids (or nieces and nephews, or your friends' kids) from discovering the joy of sports. Keep these tips in mind and play safe:



1

Get Gear

Helmets, shin and wrist guards, cleats or athletic shoes—research and purchase the recommended protective gear for all sports and outdoor activities.



2

Get the Right Gear and Use It Correctly.

The right gear fits, is in good condition (inspect used items closely) and must be worn properly to offer adequate protection. Avoid the temptation to purchase something cheaper with a poor fit; the wrong gear isn't just uncomfortable, it's dangerous.

3

Take Precaution

Make sure there's water available and the temperature isn't too hot. Take a moment to teach everyone involved the rules and how to use any necessary equipment. For school and rec leagues, ask about an action plan in the event of an injury.

4

Don't Be That Parent

You know, the one who gets kicked out of the little league game as a grown adult? Set a good example! Sports are about building teamwork, developing confidence and having fun—make sure your kids maintain perspective and keep the competition friendly.

Get Involved: Build a Stronger Community

Donate your time, resources and support to community causes, neighbors in need and local events. You'll be glad you did—studies show altruistic behavior improves self-esteem and overall happiness. If you have kids, you'll also teach them valuable lessons about helping others and caring about everyone around you.

Want to get involved but don't know where to start? There are lots of ways to get involved—just pick something you care about and dive right in! Here are a few suggestions:

Volunteer

Volunteer at a local shelter or soup kitchen, or to spend time reading to residents at a retirement home.

Donate

Donate used books, clothes, food and resources to your town's library, Salvation Army/Goodwill, food bank, and other public or charitable organizations.

Support

Support local sports and events. Common causes and experiences will help you feel closer to people around you.

Shop

Shop locally to protect the small, independent businesses that make your community unique.



July Recipe

Fruity Splash Smoothie

Ditch the ice cream and stay cool with a healthy fruit smoothie.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup fat-free milk
- 5-7 large, unsweetened frozen strawberries
- 1 medium banana, cut into chunks
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 3/4 cup orange juice
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine all ingredients in blender; blend until smooth.
2. Pour in glasses.

Total Time (Cook and Prep): 5 minutes

Servings: 2



NUTRITION INFO:

180 calories
 0 g fat
 5 g cholesterol
 65 mg sodium
 43 g carbohydrates
 6 g protein

