

NEW STUDY SUPPORTS MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL BENEFITS OF MORE FAMILY MEALS

ARLINGTON, VA, USA, May 30, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In conjunction with Mental Health Awareness Month, the FMI Foundation released its [“Staying Strong with Family Meals” Barometer summary](#) with new data revealing that family meals bring joy and connectedness to tables across America. More than half of those surveyed believe that family meals are a good way to spend time with people and make them feel more connected. This Barometer study is a recurring quantitative study among a nationally representative sample of consumers.

In addition, the study shows that family meals also help restore a sense of peace, with one-third of survey respondents saying family meals make them feel calm. Four in ten people believe family meals are relaxing and fun to eat, thereby enhancing quality of life.

“These new data underscore the [thousands of studies the FMI Foundation has curated](#) to substantiate further the expansive physical and mental health benefits of family meals,” said David Fikes, executive director of the FMI Foundation. “Sharing meals is clearly one of our best proactive practices to build a healthier nation. It is no wonder that 41% of those surveyed indicate they have been having more family meals at home over the past year and almost all, or 96%, expect they will continue to enjoy family meals in the future.”

Research suggests that youth mental health issues are reaching a tipping point in our society. The Centers for Disease Control’s 2021 [Youth Behavior Risk Assessment](#) indicates that 42% of



Family Meals deepen relationships with family and friends which is good for your mental and physical health.

In fact, it's as important to your health and well-being as sleep, exercise, and food.

Holt-Lunstad J, Robles TF, Sbarro DA. Advancing social connection as a public health priority in the United States. *Am Psychol*. 2017;72(6):517-530. doi:10.1037/amp0000103

Levina A, Wilson A, Henri M. The association between social network factors and mental health at different life stages. *Qual Life Res*. 2016;25(7):1725-1733. doi:10.1007/s11136-015-1200-7

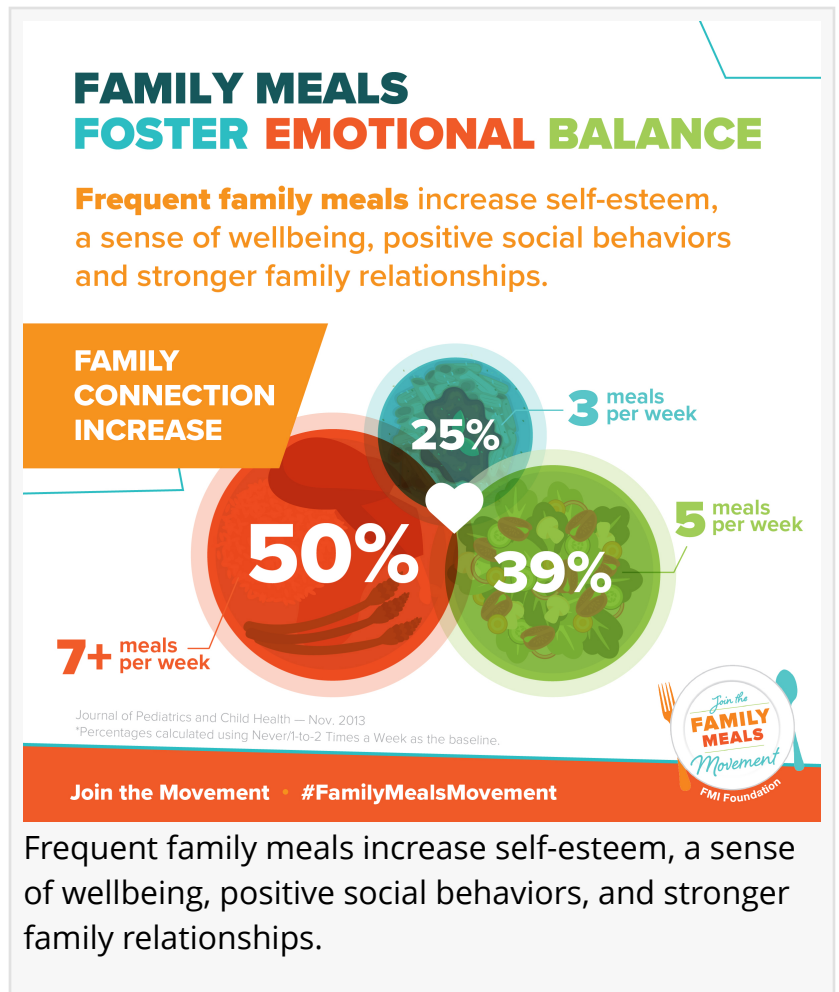
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FMI Foundation

Family Meals Deepen Relationships with Family and Friends which is good for your mental and physical health.

high school students experienced persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness that affect students' abilities to participate in their daily activities in 2021, up from 28% in 2011.

Family meals have long been associated with improving mental health including reducing symptoms of depression, decreasing violent behavior, lessening thoughts of suicide among youth and have shown to be inversely related to disordered eating. While mitigating the risks of destructive behaviors, increasing the frequency of family meals is also associated with boosting prosocial behavior and life satisfaction among adolescents. In short, family meals are a recipe for strengthening emotional well-being among children and adolescents.



Family meals are also good for parents' mental health. A paper published in 2018 examined whether parents who share meals with their families report the same indicators of well-being. These findings suggested that parents report frequent family meals are associated with higher levels of family functioning, greater self-esteem, and lower levels of depressive symptoms and stress.

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David Fikes, executive director of the FMI Foundation

“Family meals are a proven way to strengthen the emotional well-being of children and adults and bolster the bond they share as a family,” Fikes continued. “With youth depression and anxiety at an all-time high, there has never been a better time to take simple steps, like family meals, to build healthier minds and bodies.”

National Family Meals Month™, celebrated each

September, has generated such a following that it is now known as the Family Meals Movement. Embraced year round, the movement raises awareness for the many benefits of family meals as supported by thousands of peer-reviewed research studies.

About the FMI Foundation

Established in 1996, the FMI Foundation seeks to ensure continued quality and efficiency in the food retailing system and is operated for charitable, educational, and scientific purposes. To help support the role of food retailing, the FMI Foundation focuses on research, education, and resources in the area of health and well-being, which embraces food safety, nutrition and social responsibility concerns. For information regarding the FMI foundation, visit www.fmifoundation.org. #familymealsmonth; #familymealsmovement.

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Utter, Jennifer et al., "Family meals among parents: Associations with nutritional, social and emotional wellbeing." Preventive Medicine, 2018.

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FAMILY MEALS FEND OFF RISKY BEHAVIORS

The more families share meals, the less likely their kids are to drink alcohol, smoke or use marijuana.

4x LESS LIKELY
3x LESS LIKELY
2x LESS LIKELY
3+ MEALS PER WEEK

"Family Meals Annotated Bibliography"
Pennsylvania Nutrition Education Network

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