June 2023

Start a Culture of Family Wellness

June is Family Month, and June 10thmarks family health and fitness day. Whatever your family looks like, having a support system that encourages health and fitness can be very beneficial.

Families can be an amazing resource, and having supportive people in your life can positively impact your health.  Oftentimes our friends, our coworkers, our classmates, and even our pets can be the family we have. The ones we can turn to for support, comfort, advice, and guidance can play a large role in our health and wellness. Surrounding yourself with individuals who can be supportive of you toward better health and fitness can play a large role in your overall health.

One aspect that highlights the intersection between “family” and “health” is food. This bonding activity can be so instrumental in building healthy relationships and creating healthy lifestyle habits. When we want to celebrate what do we do? We go out to eat. When we want to meet up with a friend, what do we do? Grab a coffee or go to lunch. Food is celebratory, but also necessary and it happens daily. You cannot separate building healthy relationships from creating a healthy eating lifestyle.

When I was younger my mom would have me help cook and we would pretend we were on a cooking show. From discussing the ingredients, to explaining the process, to enjoying the food it was a wonderful way to experience cooking and eating in a different way as a child. I remember how fun this was but also remember that special time spent with my mom. This can be a great way to have children be a part of the cooking process and to help them feel like they have some ownership. When our son was younger I had him help make the “healthy” recipes so he could see what was in them, have fun with cooking and then get to enjoy tasting what he had made.  Even young toddlers can help by stirring ingredients or adding ingredients so allow them to be involved and don’t worry about the mess.  Having children involved in various ways can help build your relationship but also help build their healthy relationship with food.

Here are some ideas on how to involve children:

* Have children help pick what fruits and veggies they want for the week
* Allow the child to help in the cooking process and let them have fun
* Let children pack their lunches and choose from a variety of healthy options

  Helping others in our life and encouraging health and fitness can be as easy as the following:

* Plan a get together with family or friends and cook a new healthy recipe. Try and make it a regular schedule where every other time you get together you cook at home and try a new recipe.
* In the office, have a healthy snack competition where everyone brings in a healthy snack item and you vote on your favorite. Overtime you can create a cookbook with the favorites.
* Try swapping the usual lunch date or dinner date with a walk or a meet up for a hike

By setting up our environment to encourage us toward things that improve our wellbeing we help not just ourselves but those around us as well. We can impact the health of others just as they can impact our health. Let’s encourage one another and have fun along the way.

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