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Family dinner can rock your world

By LAUREN MURPHY Of No Adults Allowed

Growing up, my family always ate dinner together. The four of us would sit around the dinning room table and talk about our days, it's what kept us close when we were all so busy.

It wasn't until I was about 14 years old that I realized that wasn't normal. I was in a psychology class and my teacher told us to raise our hands if we had family dinners at least once a week. He told us to keep them raised if we ate dinner together as a family at least three times a week. Finally he asked how many of us had dinner together five times a week, I remember looking around and being confused. Not everyone ate together every night?

There are psychological benefits of eating together as a family. According to a study done by Columbia University, "teens having frequent family dinners are more likely to have excellent relationships with their parents." The same study also said, "teens who have frequent family dinners are less likely to be highly stressed.

While some people may argue that their families are the cause of their stress, spending a little bit of time together a couple times a week can bring a family unit closer together.

Eating together as a family also helps people make healthier food choices. If you're eating, alone a bag of chips and a soda will work for dinner; however, if you're eating together, chances are you'll have better food options.

Now, make a meal for your family

I made a real simple meal for my family it was not only easy to make but also delicious.



What you need:

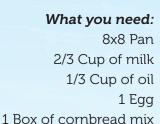
Ground beef Mustard Ketchup Brown sugar Hamburger buns

Browning meat can be tricky, so cooking

with an adult is highly recommended. Drain the meat after it's browned. Add in the brown sugar, ketchup and mustard. There are no real measurements on this, it's up to your personal preference. I would sug-

> gest starting will a small amount and adding more until you get the taste you're looking for. After you find the perfect balance, let it simmer for about five minutes.

> Serve it on a hamburger bun with a side of cornbread.



My family loves cornbread; but we were always really busy growing up, so our secret family recipe came out of a box.



Preheat the oven as the box directs, (be sure to ask an adult for help). While the oven is preheating, spray the pan with non stick cooking spray. Combine all the ingredients in a bowl and whisk them together until it's all smooth. Pour the bowl into the pan and put it in the oven for as long as the box says (you'll need an adults help with this step, too).

j@ke**BOX**

Knock, knock! Who's there? Alma. Alma who? Alma dinner's gone. Can I

have dessert?

Dirt Cup

What you need:

A serving cup, typically a clear one Chocolate pudding Oreos Gummy worms

Make the pudding and let it set. I stirred chocolate chips into my pudding but you don't have too. When it's done and you're ready to eat dessert, fill the serving cup with pudding. It

should be about halfway full. Next, put some Oreos in a plastic bag and seal it as tight as you can. Use the back of a spoon or your hands to turn the Oreos into crumbs. I used four in my cup and had a lot left over. Finally, add the gummy worms. Some people like to put theirs in between the pudding and the Oreos. I put mine on top so you can see them in the picture above.

The best part about this dessert is there is no right or wrong way to put it all together.