

Dinner rituals that correlate with child and adult BMI

October 29 2013

Beyond plate size and calorie count, the war against obesity may have a new leader – the dinner table. Families that eat together without the television on and stay seated until everyone's finished have children with lower weights and body mass index (BMI), reports a Cornell behavioral economist in the October issue of *Obesity*.

Strong, positive socialization skills during dinners possibly supplant the need to overeat, the researchers explain. Mothers and fathers who talk meaningfully with [children](#), especially young boys, about their day during dinner also have lower BMIs.

"The ritual of where one eats and how long one eats seems to be the largest driver," said Brian Wansink, professor in Cornell's Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management and director of the Cornell Food and Brand Lab. He co-authored the study with Ellen Van Kleef, assistant professor at Wageningen University, The Netherlands.

But families that eat while watching television can turn chubby, the researchers noted. "In fact, eating anywhere other than the kitchen or dining room was related to higher BMIs in both parents and in children," said Wansink.

"By focusing on family dining rituals, this research departs from the more food-centric approaches," said Wansink. "Family meals and their rituals might be an underappreciated battleground to fight [obesity](#)."

Provided by Cornell Food & Brand Lab

Citation: Dinner rituals that correlate with child and adult BMI (2013, October 29) retrieved 8 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-10-dinner-rituals-child-adult-bmi.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.