

# How family meals support Utah youth

The following information is made possible by the 2025 Utah SHARP survey. The Utah Student Health and Risk Prevention (SHARP) survey is the most comprehensive source of information on the challenges and opportunities our youth face.



## In Utah:

**60%**

of students eat with family 5+ times a week

**85.8%**

of students say they can talk to parents about personal problems.



## Just one meal a day makes a difference.

Start small—connection grows from consistency. Start with a few meals a week that work for everyone's schedule.

## Kids who have regular family meals



Often make **healthier food** choices.



Tend to feel **closer** to their families.



Show signs of **stronger vocabulary** development.



**Less likely** to use substances like alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.



More likely to get **better grades**.

## Utah teens who eat at least one meal a week with their family are



**32%** less likely to feel depressed.



**49%** less likely to vape.



**34%** less likely to consider suicide.



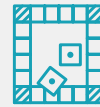
Learn more about SHARP:

[sharp.utah.gov](https://sharp.utah.gov)

## Every moment matters, and family meals are just one way to connect. You can also:



Take a **family walk** after dinner.



Try a **family game night** once a week. Take turns picking the game and put phones away.



**Run errands** together and ask about their life.



Make time daily to check in—ask about their day, share yours, and **let them open up**.



Take **advantage of car rides**—it's a great time to talk, ask questions, or just connect without distractions.



**Local adventures** – Visit a museum, concert, botanical garden, or cultural event.

## Conversation starters:

If you could change one thing about your life, what would it be?

What makes you happy?

What do you think is the most important quality a person can have?

What is something that you worry about?

What do you wish I would help you with more as a parent?

What is something about you I might not know?

**TOP TIP**

## The goal:

Have at least **one family meal** together every week—distraction and screen-free!

