

# ENJOYING YOUR HOMESTAY

**Always tell your host family where you are going and when you plan to be back. Let them know if your plans change. When possible, leave a contact address and phone number so that you can be contacted in an emergency.**

## MEALS

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A NZ family usually eats meals together.

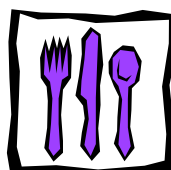
In NZ we eat quietly. For some of you it is custom to eat noisily e.g. with soup or noodles. For us this is bad manners.

It is okay to say “no thank you” to food you don’t like. Your family won’t mind. But do try new foods; it is all a part of your NZ experience. Traditionally, a NZ meal will include meat such as beef, lamb or chicken and potatoes and vegetables or salad. Fish is quite expensive so is served less often.

We usually stay at the table until everyone has finished eating.

Host families appreciate help to:

- lay the table
- serve the meal
- clear the table
- wash the dishes.



Ask your family what food you can help yourself to between meals. Homestay fees cover reasonable quantities of healthy food. You will be given three meals a day. Monday to Friday you will have a packed lunch. If you have a big appetite you may need to buy extra snacks for yourself.

You may want to go shopping with your host family or cook for them. They will be keen to try food from your country.

**Remember you must always tell your family in advance when you won’t be home for a meal. You should try to give at least three hours notice.**

## USING THE BATHROOM

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In most NZ homes the bathroom is very busy in the morning. Ask what time is best for you to take your turn and try to be as quick as you can.

You should supply your own personal toiletries e.g. shampoo, soap, toothpaste.

Make sure the bottom of the shower curtain is inside the tub and put a mat on the floor in front of the shower to stand on when you get out. Try to avoid getting water on the floor.

Spend just **10 minutes** in the shower. As well as hot water being expensive, NZ houses have a hot water tank so if you use all the hot water there will be none for the next person.

Males: Remember to raise the toilet seat before urinating.

Females: Ask your host mother about the disposal of sanitary products. These block the toilet system which is very embarrassing.

Many NZ homes do not have locks on the toilet door. If the door is closed it is custom to knock.

## YOUR BEDROOM

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Sometime you will need some quiet time in your room but don't spend all your time in your bedroom.

The bed may be different from your country. We sleep between the sheets which we wash each week. Ask your family to show you how to make your bed. It is your responsibility to keep your room tidy.

NZ families like to let sunlight and fresh air into bedrooms. We pull back the curtains and open the window during the day.

**You must not smoke in your bedroom. Ask your host parents where you can smoke.**

## BED TIME

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Most NZ families go to bed about 10.00pm. It is our custom to say "good night" to each other before we go to bed.

NZ people sleep with the light off and will expect you to do the same.

## KEEPING WARM

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NZ houses are usually bigger and colder than those in your country. When you are cold put on a warm jersey, warm trousers and socks.

Try not to use the heater too often. Heaters are for limited periods of time because electricity is expensive. Do not sleep with your heater on, and do not leave the heater on when you are not in the room. This could cause a dangerous house fire.

It is important that you are warm. Tell your family when you are cold.

## LAUNDRY

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Your host parent/s may wash your clothes for you including your underwear. Ask where to put your dirty washing. Men's and women's laundry is usually washed together. If you would prefer to do your own washing ask for instructions on using the machine.

**You must not hang wet clothing in your wardrobe or bedrooms. Damp clothes cause mould to grow and dripping water damages carpet. Do not place wet clothes on heaters or close to heaters to dry. This could cause a fire. It is our custom to dry our clothes including our underwear on the clothesline. If you are embarrassed about doing this, please talk to your host family about an alternative. Some families do have a drying machine.**

## HELPING AROUND THE HOME

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In NZ all members of the family help with the housework, including men and children. It is good to offer to do some small household jobs:

- help with the dishes (it is a great time to chat)
- offer to make your host mother/father a cup of tea/coffee
- think about other small jobs to help with

## FAMILY OUTINGS

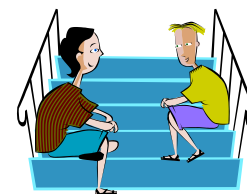
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It is fun to join with your family on outings and visits. This is a chance to see the country, make new friends and practice your English. If the family goes somewhere that involves expense, e.g. a movie, offer to pay your share. They may not accept but will feel pleased that you offered.

## *New Zealanders value independence*

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Young New Zealanders make their own entertainment and own decisions about their lives. Try to develop your own interests and do not rely on your hosts to entertain you. It is a great idea to join some local clubs.

## *Communication*

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Don't just wait for someone to talk to you. Be curious and ask questions about things and people e.g. "What is that for?", "What are you doing?" Share maps, photos and experiences. Communicate as much as possible.

Say what you really think. If you are thinking yes, say "yes". If you are thinking no, say "no". If you don't understand, say "I'm sorry, I don't understand." Your host family do not expect you to understand everything you hear and see.

## *Family disagreements*

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Many NZ families argue when they disagree. Men, women and children argue strongly. We think it is okay to express anger. This may be embarrassing for you but try to remember that it is normal in our country.

## *Other cultural differences*

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**Eye contact:** It is polite to look at someone as you talk to them. This can be difficult at first.

**Sniffing:** It is considered impolite to sniff. Try using tissues or a handkerchief instead.

**Ladies first:** In NZ men show many courtesies to women and girls e.g. a woman goes through a door before a man.

**Saying please and thank you:** "Please" and "thank you" are the most important words in the English language. We use them frequently e.g. "thank you for doing my washing" or "please pass the salt and pepper".

**Saying hello and goodbye:** It is polite to say "goodbye" when you leave in the morning and "hello" when you return home.

**Asking permission:** In our culture it is bad manners not to ask for permission. Remember to ask for example "could I please change the TV channel?" or "can I have a friend come over to visit tonight?"

## *Pets*

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NZ people enjoy family pets and most houses have an animal that lives inside. You can shut your bedroom door if you want to keep pets out.

If your host family has a dog, they usually take it for a walk. If you like walking it is okay to ask if you can go with them. It can be a good time to talk.

## *Telephone calls*

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Talk to your host family about this. Ask about the best time for you to use the telephone and ask about answering the phone when you are home by yourself.

Do not spend too long on the phone. Someone else may be trying to phone the family.

Most NZ families do not use the telephone after 9.00pm. Ask your friends not to phone you after this time.

It is free to telephone a Napier or Hastings number. Telephone numbers that start with zero cost money (except for 0800 and 0508 numbers).

For international calls it is best to buy a phone card.

## *Home security*

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Look after your house key carefully. Be careful to close all windows and lock the door if you are the last person leaving the house.

## *Taxis*

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We recommend you taxi home after dark. **It is not safe to walk alone at night.**

## *Emergencies*

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In NZ we telephone 111 for emergencies (police, fire, ambulance).

We call an ambulance for an accident or dangerous health problem such as a heart attack.

Police in NZ are friendly and helpful. It is okay to trust them. We do!

## ***Problems***

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If you have a problem, try talking with your host family just as you would with your own family. If you need further help then please see the International Accommodation and Welfare Officer or one of your tutors. If it helps you to feel more comfortable take a friend with you.

## ***Culture Shock***

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“Culture Shock” is a natural anxiety experienced by people entering a new culture. There are four stages:

- 1) Eager anticipation
- 2) Everything is beautiful
- 3) Everything is awful
- 4) Everything is okay

Some people move through the 4 stages very quickly while others take much longer. Some recognisable signs of culture shock are tiredness, loneliness, desire for home-cooking and old friends, feelings of helplessness and withdrawal and irritability. It might help to visit and talk with people from your country, cook food from your country or watch a movie in your own language. Don't worry culture shock will pass.

## ***Homestay payments***

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Payment is \$185 per week to be paid in advance. If you go away on holiday you pay \$90 for the first week away and \$60 for consecutive weeks.

It is important to tell your homestay family as soon as possible if you have plans to go on holiday or leave your homestay for other accommodation. Families feel shocked when you announce plans suddenly. You must give at least one week's notice.

**Finally, enjoy the experience. Appreciate differences. You could make life-long friends.**

