

Meal Planning

Meal planning not only helps you cook healthfully, but also saves you time and money. By planning ahead, you can avoid last minute trips to the supermarket and relax knowing that your kitchen is well-stocked with healthful foods for quick and easy meals.

Getting Started

Keep a well-stocked pantry so that you have a basic supply of simple and nutritious foods in your cupboards, refrigerator and freezer. You should be able to put a meal together in a hurry with these basic ingredients. (See **Suggested Pantry List** on page 3 for ideas).

Get meal ideas from family members. They'll be more likely to eat what is prepared and it will be easier to get help with the meal preparation and clean-up process if their food preferences are considered.

Create a list of favourite meals or recipes. Include meals or recipes that you would like to serve but often omit due to time constraints or missing ingredients.

List meals by Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner and Snacks. Organize the meals into a meal planning binder. Separate each section into

'simpler meals' and 'multi-step meals'. Include a recipe reference at the back of the binder.

Plan one week of menus. Think about specific dinner meal types for the week (eg. chicken, fish, vegetarian, pork, beef, slow cooker/casserole, etc.) and on what nights you want to have them.

Plan your week's menu on the same day each week. Assess your upcoming schedule and be realistic about how much time you'll have to prepare dinner on any given evening. Plan for quick or portable meals for those nights when there are evening activities and save multi-step meals for those nights when there is ample time to prepare a meal.

Take one night off from cooking. For example, Friday night may be pizza night (choose thin whole grain crust with vegetable toppings and lean meat such as chicken).

Make a shopping list based on your planned meals.

Check your pantry and write up your list. Make sure to include items that you will need for breakfasts, lunches and snacks. Keep a running list on the fridge to add items you need.

Post your meal plan on the refrigerator so that whoever gets home first can start the meal. Have your cookbook opened to the right recipe page.

Recycle your healthy meal plans. Keep your old meal plans and use them again later on down the road.

