

NUTRITION TO GO

Simple Food Preparation

Planning and preparing meals and snacks can be fun and easy! Some people prefer to cook their meals for the whole week over the weekend, while others make meals every day throughout the week. Meal planning does not have to be just for large families, it can be done when preparing for 1 or 2 people as well.



How do I plan meals ahead of time?

- Make a menu by picking recipes that you or your family enjoys
- Make a grocery list (see back for more information)
- Check your pantry, refrigerator, and freezer to see what you already have at home
- Plan meals around foods that are on sale or that you have coupons for
- Use seasonal recipes when possible

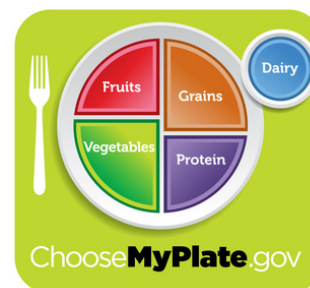


Why should I prepare or plan meals ahead of time?

- **Saves time:** Instead of spending time trying to figure out what you want to make at each meal, the meals or recipes will be ready to cook or warm up.
- **Saves money:** You can buy ingredients in bulk, freeze foods for later, and try to dine out less often.
- **Less food waste:** Meal planning can give you a plan for the food in your refrigerator and pantry, so you will throw out less food.
- **More variety:** Eat the rainbow and choose a variety of foods each week to meet all the needs of your body.



Plan your plate



Breakfast and Lunch: Choose foods from 3 of the 5 food groups

Snacks: Choose foods from 2 of the 5 food groups

Dinner: Aim to choose foods from all 5 of the food groups



Grocery List

Organize your grocery list by the food groups to make sure you are including many colorful foods in your meals each day.

Fruits:

Examples:

banana, apple, berries, mango,
watermelon, pineapple,
cantaloupe

Vegetables:

celery, cucumber, beets,
cauliflower, lettuce, tomato, bell
peppers, carrots

Protein:

beans, poultry, meat, fish, eggs,
seeds, nut butters

Grains:

whole wheat bread, brown rice,
oatmeal, quinoa, tortillas

Dairy:

plain low-fat milk, low-fat
cheese, low-fat yogurt

Other: