



Make Mealtime Easy!

Healthy Meals
for Busy Families

September 2021

Eating healthy as a family CAN be stressful and expensive.

Here, you can find **budget-friendly tips for cooking and eating at home...**

without spending too much time -- especially as you get busy this back-to-school season!



But first...why cook at home?



Home-cooked dinners are linked to healthier diets and less money spent, compared to regularly ordering out.



More home-cooked meals allow for more control over diet and improved diet quality.

For kids, frequent family meals is associated with higher self-esteem and better overall mood.

Benefits of Meal Planning



Save money

Plan to use ingredients that are on sale and in season



Less time

Speed up grocery shopping and prep when you're not on a time crunch



Reduce food waste

Use what you have to avoid spoiled produce or leftovers



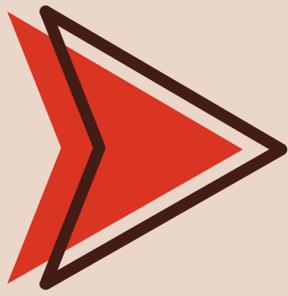
Balanced meals

Include at least 3 food groups in every meal

How Do I Meal Plan?



- Start with your family's favorite dishes and keep track of successful meals.
- Use a calendar and think about your schedule. Choose simpler meals for your busiest days.
- Take stock of your kitchen. What needs to be used up soon?
- Consider ingredients that are in season.
- Read the weekly store flyer for what's on sale and use coupons.
- Choose meals that include multiple food groups. Remember to include vegetables and fruits in the menu.
- Chop veggies like peppers and onions ahead of time and store in the fridge. Make and freeze breakfast sandwiches ahead of time.
- When cooking protein like meat, cook extra to use in tomorrow's meal. Leftover chicken can be mixed with broth, frozen vegetables, and pasta for a quick soup!



Shop Smarter



Plan to use what you have at home first. Take inventory of your fridge and pantry.



Make a grocery list and stick to it. Don't shop hungry if you can help it!



Read food labels, compare prices, and consider generic store brands.



Consider a mix of fresh, frozen, and canned produce to make your groceries last longer.



Involve kids in shopping by having them find items or choose produce of specific colors.



Freeze perishable items if buying in bulk, such as sliced bread, butter, and greens.

Need Ideas?

Kid-Friendly Snacks

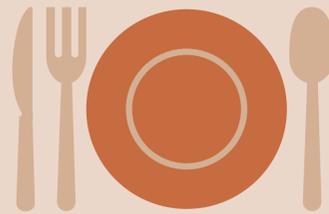


- Peanut butter + banana or crackers
- 1/2 cup homemade trail mix
- Cheese stick + apple
- Banana + small granola bar
- Hummus + carrots or sliced cucumbers
- Mashed avocado + lemon juice + pinch of salt
-> spread over crackers
- Celery sticks + peanut butter + raisins
- Fresh fruit chopped into bite-sized pieces

DIY trail mix

- + 2 cups mini pretzels
- + 1 cup unsalted nuts
- + 1 cup dried fruit
- + 1/2 cup chocolate chips

Family Meals



- Scrambled egg, sausage, and cheese quesadillas
- Cheddar grits topped with eggs, green onion, black pepper
- Turkey Taco Salad
- Sheet Pan Lemon Rosemary Chicken
- Easiest Burrito Bowl Meal Prep
- Slow Cooker Coconut Curry Lentils
- Slow Cooker White Chicken Chili
- Giant Slow Cooker Meatballs

Don't forget to hydrate!

Add a squeeze of lime for a fresh take on water.

Sheet Pan Nachos

Bake tortilla chips topped with shredded cheese + leftover ground/shredded meat + diced bell pepper + sliced mushrooms

Sometimes, the hardest part about cooking is not knowing what to cook. Use these tips to start small - plan one meal per day or per week. Mealtime might become something and your family look forward to!

Henna Tzeng
Patient Food and Nutrition Services
300 N. Ingalls Street
NIB N18E20
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-5407
(734) 936-5197
www.med.umich.edu/pfans/services/tip.html



More Resources

- **Brighter Bites: Shopping and Planning** - https://www.brighterbites.org/tip-sheets/?term_id=239
- **Purdue University Extension: Eat Gather Go** - www.eatgathergo.org/eat/
- **Iowa State University Extension: Spend Smart, Eat Smart** - <https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/>
- **US FDA: Nutrition Facts Label** - www.fda.gov/food/new-nutrition-facts-label/how-understand-and-use-nutrition-facts-label
- **USDA: Meal Prep and Cooking Tips** - www.nutrition.gov/topics/shopping-cooking-and-meal-planning/meal-prep-and-cooking-tips
- **14 Healthy, Cheap Recipes** - www.moneyunder30.com/easy-healthy-cheap-recipes
- **MyPlate Kitchen: Recipes** - www.myplate.gov/myplate-kitchen/recipes
- **Budget Bytes: Meal Prep Recipes** - www.budgetbytes.com/category/extra-bytes/budget-friendly-meal-prep/