

## **Planning meals ahead of time saves time and money, and makes healthy choices easier.**

**Meal planning doesn't mean having to plan every meal for every day of the week (unless you really want to). If you are new to meal planning start one week at a time.**

Simplified meal planning can be as basic as:

- 2-3 options for breakfast
- 2-3 options for lunch
- 4 dinners (others can be leftovers, etc.)

### **How to meal plan:**

1. Take stock of what's already in the fridge, freezer, and pantry. What needs to be used?
2. Think of the Myplate: protein, vegetable, whole grain, and fruit.
3. Come up with your meal ideas (remember- use some of the food you already have on hand). Plan meals based on schedule (i.e. easiest dinner on busiest night of the week).
4. Make a grocery list
5. Shop
6. Optional: food prep (i.e. chop vegetables so they are ready to go, cook a large batch of rice or shredded chicken, etc.)



### **If your goal is to save money with meal planning:**

- buy foods you use daily in bulk or when on sale
- base your meals off of what meat or veggies are on sale
- frozen and canned fruits and veggies can be a great and inexpensive alternative

# Stocking Your Pantry

Keep these ingredients on hand to create quick and healthy meals.

## **Baking Products.**

Have flour, sugar, baking soda, and baking powder on hand. They are basic ingredients for many fresh baked goods.

## **Canned Beans and Fish**

Add beans like kidney, black, pinto, or lima to salads and soups. Or, serve as side dishes or add to a main dish. Use canned tuna and salmon to add protein to salads, casseroles, and pasta.

## **Canned Fruits and Vegetables.**

Canned produce like pineapple, applesauce, corn, and green beans make quick and easy side dishes or snacks on their own. Or, use as an ingredient to stretch main dishes.

## **Canned or Powdered Milk.**

Canned low-fat evaporated and dry powdered milk keep longer than fresh. Prepare them according to the package directions. Use in recipes instead of fresh milk.

## **Canned Tomato Products.**

Keep canned tomato sauce and whole, diced, or puréed tomatoes on hand. They are basic ingredients in a wide range of recipes.

## **Cereals.**

Stock up when they're on sale. Enjoy with fruit and milk. Or, use to make trail mixes, baked goods, or crispy coatings for meat, poultry, and fish.

## **Dried Fruit and Nuts.**

Use as a snack on their own or in homemade trail mix. Add to cereals, baked goods, and yogurt for a snack or breakfast.

## **Dried Herbs.**

Buy the dried herbs and spices you use often. Use to add flavor in place of extra salt.

## **Oil.**

Canola and olive oils are healthy choices when cooking or making dressings. Cooking spray keeps food from sticking to the pan.

## **Pasta and Rice.**

Buy on sale or in bulk or family-size packages. Store in airtight containers after opening to keep fresh and prevent pests.

## **Vinegar.**

Buy on sale or in bulk or family-size packages. Store in airtight containers after opening to keep fresh and prevent pests.



## Create your own meal plan

First- take note of what you already have that can be used in your plan.

Ingredients I have on hand  
that need to be used:

Ingredients I can use in more  
than one meal:

Remember: think of ways to use leftovers in other meals so they don't go to waste.



## Create your own meal plan

List your meal and snack ideas below using the foods you have on hand from the previous page. Aim to include at least 3 food groups per meal and two food groups per snack. Plan 2-3 lunch ideas and 4 dinner ideas.

BREAKFAST

LUNCH

DINNER

SNACKS

SHOPPING LIST

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Planning ahead is the key to success when it comes to eating a nutritious diet.

## PLAN AHEAD

- Think about the plate when planning meals (PROTEIN, GRAINS, FRUITS, VEGETABLES)
- Include your kids in meal planning
- Plan meals based on what you currently have in the pantry or fridge in order to save money and minimize food waste
- Consider your busiest days. What would make it easier to eat a healthy meal?
  - a crock pot or instant pot meal, leftovers ready to be re-heated
  - a healthy snack, like a veggie tray, you can pull out and serve until dinner is ready

## BATCH COOKING/ PREPPING

Cook a larger quantity in order to have leftovers or use the food in a different way. Batch cooking can be most effective if you prep the food group your family has the hardest time either fitting in or that takes the longest to cook,

examples:

- brown rice
- quinoa
- Grilled chicken/meat
- Ground beef
- Shredded meat
- roasted veggies, sweet potatoes, etc.
- oat meal, steel cut oats
- boiled eggs
- chop/wash fruits and veggies



## SAME FOOD-DIFFERENT WAY

- boiled eggs = plain with toast OR egg salad
- ground beef = in chili OR tacos OR meat sauce
- shredded meat = soup OR on salad OR in tacos/burrito bowl
- roasted veggies = side dish OR in an omelette OR in stir fry

# HEALTHY MEAL MIX-AND-MATCH: PASTA DINNER

PASTA 1.5 LB	PROTEIN	VEGGIES 2 cups, any combo	SAUCE	SEASONING
whole grain pasta	lean ground beef, turkey, chicken. Cooked and drained (1 lb)	spinach, chard, or kale	marinara	fresh or dried basil
brown rice pasta	extra-firm tofu, drained and crumbled (14 oz package)	carrots	peanut sauce	garlic powder or minced garlic
chickpea pasta	beans, rinsed and drained. (1 or 2 cups cooked)	broccoli	canned diced or crushed tomatoes	dried oregano
	frozen peas or edamame, thawed and drained (2 cups)	sugar snap or snow peas	homemade cheese sauce/white sauce	
	chicken or turkey sausage, cooked and sliced (1 lb)	zucchini or squash		
		onion		

## DIRECTIONS:

1. Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain pasta in a colander.
2. Cook protein as needed. If using, add fresh garlic during the last minute of cooking time.
3. Cook veggies by steaming, blanching, grilling, roasting, sauteing, or adding to boiling pasta water during the last few minutes of cooking.
4. In a large pot over medium heat, heat sauce. If using, add optional spices now. Add protein and veggies to heat through. Toss with hot cooked pasta and serve.

## TRY THESE COMBOS:

### **Peanut Noodles**

Whole grain spaghetti + tofu + sugar snap peas + carrots + peanut sauce

### **Summer Pasta Primavera**

Whole grain pasta + diced tomatoes + cannellini beans + zucchini + garlic

### **Spaghetti and Meat Sauce**

Whole grain pasta + lean ground beef + zucchini + marinara + basil + oregano + garlic





# HEALTHY MEAL MIX-AND-MATCH: THE SUPER SALAD

<b>GREENS</b> 4 cups	<b>PROTEIN</b>	<b>VEGGIES</b> 2 cups, any combo	<b>OPTIONAL ADD-INS</b>	<b>DRESSING</b> 1/4 cup
leaf lettuce	canned beans, rinsed and drained	carrots, beets peeled and shredded	toasted nuts	oil + vinegar + lemon juice with garlic
spinach	hard boiled eggs	broccoli or cauliflower	cheese, crumbled or shredded	honey mustard dressing
romaine	roasted chicken, turkey, beef, or pork. Shredded or sliced.	cucumber chopped or sliced	citrus fruit segmented	citrus dressing
mixed greens	extra-firm tofu, crumbled and drained	fresh tomatoes	olives	balsamic vinaigrette
	frozen peas or edamame, thawed and drained	bell pepper chopped	avocado	low-fat ranch
	lunch meat	radishes	melon, other fresh fruit	salsa or bbq mixed w/ ranch
			dried fruit like raisins	

## make your own dressing

feel free to adjust amounts based on your taste preferences and desired thickness.

<b>simple salad dressing</b>	<b>honey mustard</b>	<b>citrus dressing</b>	<b>balsamic vinaigrette</b>	<b>creamy ranch dressing</b>
3 T olive oil 2 T red wine vinegar juice of 1/2 lemon 1 t salt 1 t pepper	6 T mustard 1/2 T fresh lemon juice OR apple cider vinegar 1.5 T honey 1 t olive oil salt + pepper to taste	2 T lime, lemon, or orange juice 3-4 T olive oil salt + pepper to taste	2 T balsamic vinegar 1 T dijon mustard 3-4 T olive oil salt + pepper to taste	1 6oz container plain yogurt 1/3 c low-fat mayo 2 T white vinegar 1T dried dill 1/4 t garlic powder pinch of salt

### EXAMPLES

**Citrus Salad:** spring mix + avocado + citrus fruit + red onion + citrus dressing

**Cobb Salad:** romaine + boiled egg + shredded cheese + tomatoes + carrots + creamy ranch

**Taco Salad:** Mixed greens + chicken + beans + bell pepper + avocado + creamy ranch mixed with salsa



# healthy meal mix-and-match: STIR-FRY DINNER

VEGGIES (2-3 c total)	PROTEIN	OPTIONAL FLAVORING	SAUCE	GRAIN (1 cup dry)
bell pepper, sliced	boneless, skinless chicken breast or thighs trimmed and cut into bite-sized pieces (1 lb)	minced garlic (1T)	peanut sauce	brown rice
carrots or celery		minced ginger (or 1/2 tsp ground ginger)	spicy soy sauce	whole grain couscous
snow peas, sugar snap peas	sirloin or flank steak, trimmed and cut into bite-sized pieces (1 lb)	sesame seeds	lemon stir-fry sauce	quinoa
broccoli or cauliflower	Pork tenderloin or boneless loin chops, trimmed, cut into bite sized pieces	fruit like mandarin oranges, mango, or pineapple		rice noodles or whole wheat pasta
zucchini or squash				
mushrooms	extra firm tofu, drained, cut into 1-inch cubes (14 oz package)			
onions	frozen edamame, thawed and drained (2 cups)			
water chestnuts, canned				
cabbage, thinly sliced				

## directions:

1. Cook grains following package instructions. While grains cook, make stir-fry
  2. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, heat 1 T oil. Add meat or poultry. Stir occasionally until just cooked through, about 4-6 minutes. Transfer to plate.
  3. Add veggies to skillet. Start with harder veggies (onion, green beans, carrot, broccoli, etc.). As they begin to soften, add softer veggies (zucchini, yellow squash) and keep cooking. Total cook time around 10 minutes.
  4. If using garlic/ginger, add to skillet when all veggies are soft. Stir until fragrant.
  5. Stir in sauce. Remove from heat. Add in meat. Serve over cooked grains.
- \*\*if using tofu or edamame, omit step 2. Add tofu or edamame in step 3, during last 3-5 min of veggie cook time. Heat through.

## make your own sauce

peanut sauce	spicy soy sauce	lemon stir fry sauce
1/4 c peanut butter 1/3 c warm water 1/4 c low sodium soy sauce 2 T rice vinegar or lime juice 1 T sugar or honey	1/4 c low-sodium soy sauce 1 T brown sugar 1 T corn starch 1 t minced jalepeno (or chili paste or sriracha) 1/2 t ground ginger	3 T lemon juice 3 T low-sodium soy sauce 2 t cornstarch

## directions for sauces:

Feel free to adjust amounts based on your taste preferences and desired thickness.

Whisk with a fork in small bowl. Allow thinner sauces to come to boil in hot pan before removing from heat.





# healthy meal mix-and-match: THE SUPER SMOOTHIE

<b>FRUIT</b> (fresh or frozen)
blueberries
bananas
pineapple
mango
strawberries
cherries
orange
apple
dates (1-2, pitted)

<b>VEGGIE</b> 1-2 large handfuls
spinach
kale
avocado
cauliflower (try frozen for extra creamy texture)
cucumber

<b>LIQUID</b> 4-8 ounces
milk
water
no-sugar added milk substitute (almond, coconut, etc.)

<b>EXTRAS</b>
peanut butter/ almond butter (1-2T)
chia seeds
1/4 c oats
greek yogurt/ cottage cheese (1/4-1/2c)
PB2 peanut butter powder
unsweetened cocoa powder
sprinkle of cinnamon

## directions:

1. Add smoothie ingredients to blender. Add about 1/2c ice and blend. (Less ice required when using frozen fruit. )

## note:

- avoid using fruit juice. Whole fruit (fresh or frozen) adds fiber for a more filling smoothie.
- avocados, frozen bananas, and cottage cheese are excellent at making smoothies more thick and creamy.
- less liquid = thicker smoothie

## try these combos:

### Chocolate Peanut Butter

peanut butter + banana + greens + cocoa powder

### Tropical

mango + pineapple + spinach + yogurt

### Berry Good

berries + avocado + cottage cheese + kale

### Apple Pie

apple + date + frozen cauliflower + cinnamon



# HEALTHY BREAKFAST IDEAS

Mix + Match two or more food groups for a balanced breakfast.

## FRUIT/VEGGIES

- melon
  - berries
  - canned fruit
  - banana
  - apple
  - orange
  - pineapple
  - peach
  - nectarine
  - grapes
  - avocado
  - bell peppers
  - spinach
  - broccoli
  - onion
  - tomatillo
- (think veggies that would be good in an egg scramble or in a green smoothie)

## PROTEIN/ GRAINS

- peanut butter/  
almond butter
- eggs
- low-sugar  
yogurt
- cottage cheese
- boiled eggs
- whole grain cereal
- oats
- whole grain  
pancakes/waffles
- whole grain toast

## TRY THESE YUMMY BREAKFAST IDEAS!

- oats + berries + peanut butter
- boiled eggs + toast
- yogurt with fruit
- avocado toast + egg
- breakfast fruit kabobs dipped in yogurt
- smoothie with yogurt, milk, fruit, vegetables (no juice!)
- whole grain cereal + strawberries
- peanut butter toast + banana
- whole grain pancakes topped with peanut butter or yogurt + fruit (hold the syrup!)
- banana-egg pancake. Mash 2 eggs with one banana. Cook like a pancake on pre-heated, greased griddle or pan. Top with fruit, yogurt, peanut butter, etc.



# HEALTHY LUNCHBOX IDEAS

Mix + Match two or more food groups for a balanced lunch.

## FRUIT/VEGGIES

- melon
- berries
- canned fruit
- banana
- apple
- orange
- pineapple
- peach
- nectarine
- grapes
- avocado
- carrot sticks
- bell peppers
- cherry tomatoes
- celery sticks
- cucumber slices
- cauliflower
- radishes

## PROTEIN/ GRAINS

- peanut butter/almond butter
- boiled eggs
- low-sugar yogurt
- cottage cheese
- chicken salad
- tuna salad
- whole grain cereal
- string cheese
- whole grain bread
- whole grain crackers
- mixed nuts
- pretzels

## TRY THESE YUMMY LUNCH IDEAS!

- whole grain peanut butter and banana sandwich
- lunch meat + string cheese roll-up
- turkey and cheese sandwich w/ lettuce and tomato
- lunch meat + veggies with hummus in a wrap
- chicken salad sandwich or wrap
- tuna salad + crackers + celery
- chickpea salad
- pasta salad with veggies + italian dressing
- mix and match bento box with veggies and dip, fruit, etc. (i.e. boiled eggs + cheese stick + clementine + carrot sticks w/ ranch, pretzels)



# HEALTHY SNACKING

Mix + Match two food groups for a balanced snack.

## FRUIT

- strawberries
- banana
- blueberries
- watermelon
- pineapple
- cantaloupe
- grapes
- peaches
- nectarines
- clementines
- canned fruit
- pears
- apple slices
- frozen fruit
- persimmon
- cherries
- mango
- pomegranate
- honey dew
- raspberries
- black berries

## VEGGIES

- bell pepper slices
- sugar snap peas
- salad/greens
- baby carrots
- celery sticks
- cherry tomatoes
- radishes
- cucumber slices
- jicama
- snow peas
- cauliflower

## PROTEIN/ GRAINS

- string cheese
- hummus
- peanut butter
- nuts/seeds
- yogurt
- cottage cheese
- boiled eggs
- plain popcorn
- whole grain crackers
- whole grain bread

## WRITE YOUR IDEAS HERE!

ex. ants on a log (celery + peanut butter + raisins)



# Veggie Wraps

Serves 4, 3 pinwheels each


Prep time: 15 minutes • Cook time: None

## Ingredients











4 large radishes  
1 small carrot  
1 cup salad greens  
3 sprigs fresh herbs (parsley, dill, cilantro, or combination)  
1 lemon  
2 ounces low-fat Swiss or cheddar cheese  
1 large, ripe avocado  
¼ cup nonfat plain yogurt  
3 (8-inch) whole wheat flour tortillas  
Optional Ingredients  
5 ounces thinly sliced roasted turkey

## Materials

Box grater • Cutting board  
• Fork • Medium bowl •  
Measuring cups • Sharp knife •  
Small bowl • Vegetable peeler

 = Have kids help with the steps marked with the "little helping hand"!

## Directions

-  1. Scrub and rinse radishes and carrots. Rinse salad greens. Pat all veggies dry.
2. Use a vegetable peeler to peel radishes and carrots into long, thin strips. In a medium bowl, collect veggie strips.
-  3. Rinse herbs. Pluck leaves off stems. Tear leaves into smaller pieces.
-  4. Rinse lemon. Zest using the small holes of a box grater. Cut in half and remove seeds.
-  5. Grate cheese.
6. Slice avocado lengthwise. Remove pit. Scoop avocado out of shell.
-  7. In a small bowl, use a fork to mash avocado. Stir in yogurt.
-  8. Squeeze a little lemon juice onto avocado mixture. Add herbs and a pinch of lemon zest. Stir.
-  9. Warm 1 tortilla in the microwave for 30 seconds, or longer as needed.
-  10. Place the warm tortilla on a cutting board. Spread ⅓ avocado mixture over center of tortilla. Layer with ⅓ greens, ⅓ grated veggies, and ⅓ cheese. If using turkey, add ⅓ turkey now. Squeeze more lemon juice over the mixture.
-  11. Roll tortilla and toppings into a log shape. Use a knife to slice wrap into four "pinwheels."
-  12. Repeat process for the other 2 tortillas. You will end up with a total of 12 pinwheels.

## Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 3 pinwheels  
Servings Per Recipe 4

Amount Per Serving

Calories 220    Calories from Fat 100

% Daily Value\*

Total Fat 11g    14%

Saturated Fat 2.5g    13%

Trans Fat 0g

Cholesterol 5mg    2%

Sodium 350mg    15%

Total Carbohydrate 25g    9%

Dietary Fiber 4g    14%

Sugars 3g

Protein 9g

Vitamin A 50%    • Vitamin C 25%

Calcium 10%    • Iron 6%

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

## Chef's Notes

- Use any of your favorite seasonal veggies in this wrap. Grate, chop, or peel into thin slices before adding.
- Use 1 cup homemade guacamole in place of avocado.



# Make Food Fun! – Veggie Wraps

Easy and fast tips for making food fun for kids.



Serve open faced, arranging the veggies in a design or face.

## Tips and Tricks:

To keep tortillas longer, store them in the fridge or even the freezer. That way you'll always have them available to make a quick snack, lunch, or dinner.

## Tips and Tricks:

To serve the veggie wraps toasted, warm in a pan on the stovetop or place them under the broiler. Just make sure to watch them as they will cook quickly.



Arrange veggies in a pattern to create a rainbow or colorful display when served.



Serve as "sushi" or pinwheels.

## Tips and Tricks:

Talk about quick and easy! Veggie wraps don't require any cooking and can be made in advance for grab-n-go lunches or dinner.