

WHY PLAN A MEAL?

Many people would say they don't *plan* meals - at least they don't write them down in advance. But everyone plans, even if only for how to stock the refrigerator. *Planning meals* means thinking about what foods to eat together at meals for a day or even a whole week.

There are many advantages to planning meals and you don't need to be locked into a rigid schedule. Planning ahead:

- **SAVES TIME AND EFFORT** Needed items will be on hand, which means fewer trips to the grocery store. Planning helps you make good use of leftovers, which can decrease preparation time and food cost. This also means thinking of groceries on hand and making a shopping list before going to the store.
- **SAVES MONEY** When you go to the store you will know what you need. Then you can compare prices and buy only what you can use without waste. Take advantage of foods in season for good buys. Preplanned quick meals can replace more costly convenience items and restaurant meals, some of the time at least.
- **INCREASES VARIETY** You can include the different types of foods you need for nutrients and dietary fiber. You can include new food items, try new styles of preparation, and vary the colors, textures, flavors, and shapes of foods to make the meals attractive and interesting.
- **HELPS AVOID TOO MUCH FAT, SUGAR, AND SODIUM IN YOUR DIET** You can plan for foods that help balance your food choices to control your total intake of fat, sugars, and sodium.



SNACKS

Crunchy Apple Treasures

- 3 apples
- 1/2 cup peanut butter
- 1/2 cup crispy rice cereal
- 1/8 cup raisins



Wash and dry your hands and the apples. Cut apples in half and remove core. Mix peanut butter, cereal, and raisins. Spoon peanut butter mixture into apples. Makes 6.

Chicken Feed

- 1 cup Cheerios type cereal
- 1 cup Kix type cereal
- 1 cup peanuts
- 1/4 cup sunflower seeds
- 1 cup raisins



Mix all ingredients together in large bowl. Store in airtight container. *Peanuts should NOT be offered to infants or toddlers.*

Hard Boiled Eggs with Dipping

Sauce:

1. Place eggs in a pan, cover with cold water.
2. Bring to a boil.
3. Once water boils, remove from burner
4. Put lid on and let sit for 20 minutes
5. Cool eggs by running cold water over them.
6. Refrigerate.
7. Serve with a dipping sauce such as honey mustard or salsa.

Directions for Honey Mustard Dipping Sauce:

Mix 1-tablespoon Dijon mustard with 1 tablespoon honey. Enjoy with hard boiled eggs!

Personal Pan Pizzas

Choose one of the following: French bread, English muffins, pita bread, bagels, or flour tortillas. Spread 2 tablespoons pizza sauce on each pizza. Add your favorite toppings: chopped mushrooms, peppers, cooked meat pieces, and onion. Top with grated mozzarella cheese.

Bake in a preheated 425° oven. Bake 12-15 minutes or until golden. Let everyone make their own pizza!

Yogurt Smoothie

- 1 cup vanilla yogurt
- 1 banana (Peel and freeze ripe bananas for a frappe)
- 1 cup frozen strawberries
- 3/4 cup orange juice (or less for thicker consistency)



Mix in blender until smooth.

Chili-Bean Dip

- 1 (16 ounce) can vegetarian baked beans
- 1 tsp chili powder
- chopped onion, as much as you'd like
- shredded cheese, if desired
- celery or carrot sticks, crackers or tortilla chips

Mash beans in a bowl. Add onion and chili powder. Heat on top of stove or in microwave. Serve with vegetables, crackers, or tortillas.



Oven French Fries

4-5 medium potatoes or try a sweet potato or two!
1-2 T cooking oil
seasoning salt or parmesan cheese, to taste

Preheat oven to 450°. Wash and scrub potatoes carefully. Cut each potato into 8 wedges or slices 1/2 inch thick. Pour the oil into a large bowl and toss potato wedges in the oil to coat all surfaces. Arrange on a shallow baking pan. Season with seasoning salt, or parmesan cheese to taste. Bake in a hot oven until they turn brown and tender (about 30 minutes). Turn once.

Yogurt Parfaits



Vanilla or lemon flavored lowfat yogurt
Choice of fruits: banana, berries, pineapple, grapes
Granola or dry cereal or graham cracker crumbs

Layer spoonfuls of yogurt with layers of fruit. Top with granola or other cereal. Great easy snack!

Fruit or Veggie Roll-ups

peanut butter OR lite cream cheese
fresh fruit - bananas and raisins are good
honey, optional
flour tortillas

Spread peanut butter or cream cheese on a flour tortilla. Place fruit in the center of the tortilla. Drizzle a little honey and some raisins on top. Roll up! You can also use chopped broccoli, carrots and other crisp veggies with the cream cheese. Use seasoned salt or ranch dressing to flavor.

Veggie Dip

3/4 cup plain, lowfat yogurt
1/2-1 tsp powdered ranch dressing
1-2 tsp lowfat mayonnaise



Mix together and chill. Serve with vegetable sticks (broccoli, cauliflower, green peppers, carrots, mushrooms, celery).

Orange Frothy

6 ounces frozen orange juice
1 cup milk
1 cup water
1 tsp vanilla
10 ice cubes

Mix all ingredients together. Process in a blender for a slushy beverage. Add a banana or berries for a change.

Cheese and Bean Quesadillas

1 can refried beans
colby-jack cheese, shredded
flour tortillas
green pepper and onions, chopped (optional)

Spread one half of each tortilla with 1 T. refried beans. Sprinkle with 1-2 tablespoons cheese, fold and heat on griddle until toasty brown on both sides. This makes a lot! Refried beans can be frozen for longer storage.

Crunchy Granola

3 T packed brown sugar
3 T honey
1 1/2 tsp vegetable oil
1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp vanilla
2 cups rolled oats
1 cup whole almonds (optional)
2/3 cups raisins



In a 1-quart saucepan, combine sugar, honey, vegetable oil, cinnamon and vanilla. Stir over low heat until sugar is just dissolved.

Remove from heat and mix in oats. Spread out evenly on a lightly oiled baking sheet. Bake in center of 350 oven for 10 minutes. Sprinkle almonds over the top and bake 10 more minutes until almonds are golden brown. Cool completely, then mix with raisins in a bowl. Store in an airtight container up to 2 weeks. Makes an excellent breakfast cereal or topping for yogurt.

RECIPES FOR MORE QUICK, EASY MEALS

QUICK AND EASY SUPPER SOUP (Serves 6)

1 large can V-8 or tomato juice; spicy version optional
1 pound hamburger
1 onion, chopped

2 24-oz cans Veg-All mixed vegetables, drained OR 1 bag frozen mixed vegetables

*Brown meat and onion together and drain off excess fat. Add the juice and vegetables. Heat through. Serve with crackers and cheese, and sliced fruit for a complete and balanced meal. (Est. cost: \$4.25)
Optional: Add 1 tsp Italian seasoning and 1 can beans for an easy minestrone.*



SPICY FRIED RICE (Serves 4-6)

3 cups cooked brown rice (1 cup raw rice)
2-3 T vegetable oil
 $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. cooked or raw meat, cut in thin strips (chicken, pork, beef)
1-2 cloves garlic, minced or 1 tsp garlic powder
1 onion, chopped
1 tsp each - salt, pepper, sugar
1 T soy sauce

1 cup leftover or frozen vegetables (peas, carrots, green beans, or broccoli)

2 eggs

Heat 2-3 T. oil in a large skillet and add the meat, garlic, onion, salt, pepper, sugar and soy sauce. Cook until tender and hot, about 1-2 minutes. Add the 3 cups of cooked rice. Stir-fry 4-5 minutes. Add the vegetables. Stir well into rice mixture. Just before serving, add 2 eggs, beaten. Stir carefully through rice until eggs are cooked. Serve piping hot with salad of pineapple and mandarin oranges and bananas.

Estimated cost: \$4.55



TACO SALAD (Serves 4 or 5)

1/2 pound hamburger
1 can pinto or black beans, rinsed and drained
 $\frac{1}{2}$ package taco seasoning mix
 $\frac{1}{2}$ head dark green lettuce (like romaine)

2 medium tomatoes, chopped OR 1 can diced, drained
1 small onion, chopped
2 cups tortilla chips
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated cheese and salsa to taste

Brown hamburger in frying pan, and drain off fat. Add beans, taco seasoning, and water. Stir and simmer for 5 minutes. Tear lettuce into bite-sized pieces, and put into large bowl. Top with cut-up tomatoes and onion. Spoon hamburger and bean mixture over lettuce. Sprinkle with cheese, crushed tortilla chips and salsa. Toss lightly and serve. Approximate cost: \$5.10



Remember: Plan to include fruits and vegetables in your meals. They are easy, relatively low-cost, good, and good for you.

TRY A FRITTATA! (OR A VEGGIE OMELET) Makes 4 servings

2-3 cups chopped vegetables (you choose: broccoli, fresh mushrooms, onion, sweet peppers, cooked potato)

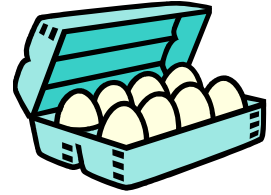
6 eggs

1/3 cup water

1 tsp Italian seasoning, crushed

½ cup (2 ounces) shredded mozzarella cheese

1 T parmesan cheese, optional



Evenly coat pan with non-stick cooking spray. Over medium heat, saute broccoli, mushrooms, peppers, and onions until crisp-tender, about 5 minutes. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, beat together eggs, water and seasoning until well blended. Stir in mozzarella cheese. Pour over vegetable mixture. Cover. Cook until eggs are almost set, about 10-12 minutes. Then broil about 6 inches from heat until eggs are completely set, about 1 - 2 minutes. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese, if desired. Slide onto a serving platter and cut into wedges to serve with whole wheat toast and milk. **Note:** Using the broiler will help brown the eggs, but isn't required. If you don't have a broiler you will need to leave the eggs on the burner and cover the pan for several minutes more. To protect your pan while in the broiler, wrap the handle with foil.

CHICKEN (OR TUNA) PASTA SALAD Makes 4 servings

1 cup pasta, uncooked (shapes are fun, or try whole wheat pasta)

2 cups cooked chicken or turkey; or 1 large can or package of tuna

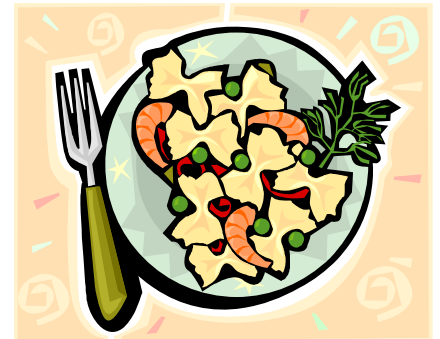
chopped onion, to taste

1 cup seedless grapes or chopped apple

½ cup celery, chopped

1/3 cup light salad dressing, mayonnaise type

salad greens



Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain. Stir chopped onion into salad dressing. Mix together lightly: pasta, chicken, grapes and celery. Stir in salad dressing. Chill well. Serve on salad greens.

SERVE A MEAL IN A POTATO

Baked potatoes are the ultimate convenience food...and they're nutritious. Scrub them and bake them in the oven at 375 degrees for about an hour or in the microwave if time is limited. Allow 4-5 minutes for a potato. Be sure to pierce them with a fork beforehand. Top them with Italian meat sauce and Parmesan cheese; leftover chili and Cheddar cheese; broccoli, cheese sauce and cooked chicken; Asian stir-fry vegetables; or salsa, shredded cheese, and green onions! Mix and match for your favorite combination! Serve with garlic bread, orange slices and milk.

