

## Healthy Eating: Meal Planning



### Why is it good to plan meals?

Planning your meals ahead of time can help you eat healthy foods and snacks. Once you get into the habit of planning, you also can reduce trips to the grocery store, save time, and save money.

Try to plan and shop for a week's worth of meals at a time. You're less likely to go out to eat or buy expensive convenience foods during the week when the ingredients for dinner are already in your kitchen.

### How do you get started?

Set aside some time on the weekend for planning your next week's meals. Make copies of the meal-planning form that follows and fill one out every week. Then make a separate shopping list before you go to the store.

Try these tips for planning:

- Use cookbooks or online recipes to plan several main meals. Buy one good, general cookbook. Used bookstores are a good source, or check some out at the library.
- Plan some quick meals for busy nights.
- Double some recipes that freeze well, and save half for other busy nights when you don't have time to cook.
- Plan meals and snacks around healthy ingredients. Try to use fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables, lean meats (such as skinless chicken), and fish as often as you can.
- Instead of buying ready-made desserts, make your own cookies, cakes, or muffins on the weekend. Freeze some to have later.

### What are good foods to have on hand?

Keep your kitchen stocked so you can quickly pull together meals. Some basic ingredients to have are:

- Frozen chicken breasts and fish fillets.
- Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables.
- Canned and dried beans, such as pinto beans, white beans, and black beans.
- Vegetable or chicken broth.
- Tomato sauce and canned tomatoes.
- Whole-grain noodles and brown rice.
- Onions and garlic.
- Oatmeal or other hot cereal.
- Peanut butter, nuts, and dried fruit.

## Weekly meal plan

Day	List breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	

