

Mastering Meal Planning

Meal planning can be a great way to ensure that getting healthy meals on the table (or on-the-go) will happen. A registered dietitian nutritionist can help provide recommendations for the amount and frequency of your meals.

What Type of Meal Planner are You?

Did you know there are a variety of ways to meal plan? Meal planning can be beneficial from a cost and time savings standpoint, and it doesn't have to be boring, stressful or overwhelming. Work with a dietitian to determine what type of meal planner you are and how to ensure your meals meet your nutrition and lifestyle preferences.

Prep Type	Description
The Weekly Meal Planner	Maps out their meals for the week and gets all the ingredients they need but saves all the actual cooking for mealtime.
The Mini Meal Prepper	Batch cooks meal components (like rice, chicken, veggies, etc.) or preps one or two items intended to be consumed in the next 3 days but saves the bulk of their actual meal assembly for the day of.
The Meal-Planning and Prep Aficionado*	Prepares everything needed for the next 3 days in advance and divides it into single serve portions so all that's needed is to reheat (if necessary) and eat.

*Refrigerated leftovers should be consumed within 3 days of cooking/prepping to reduce risk of foodborne illnesses. Any cooked/prepared portions that will not be consumed within 3 days should be frozen.

My Preferred Prep Type is: _____

6 Tips for Successful Meal Planning

Now that you know what type of meal planner you are, here are some tips to help you get started.

- 1. See what you already have.** Look at what's in your freezer, refrigerator, pantry and cabinets. What needs to be used up? Consider "best by" dates and perishable items so you can include what you already have on hand before developing your plan to help reduce food waste.
- 2. Consider your schedule.** What activities do you have planned for the week that might impact mealtime? This will help you determine which meals will be eaten at home and how much prep time you have.
- 3. Map out your meals (and snacks) for the week.** Now that you know what you need to use up and what your schedule looks like for the week, you can map out your plan. Work with a dietitian to use the template on page 3 as a guide.
- 4. Make sure your meals are balanced.** Your dietitian can provide guidance on how much of each food group (fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods and dairy/fortified soy products) you should aim to eat daily to ensure balance. They can also provide you with resources on how to create a balanced plate, like MyPlate.gov.
- 5. Have a plan for leftovers.** Think leftovers are boring? Reinvent them! Rotisserie chicken for dinner? Plan to use the leftovers to top a salad, make soup or build a sandwich for lunch the next day. Leftover veggies? Throw them in a wrap or toss them into an omelet.
- 6. Create your grocery list.** With your plan in place, it's time to make your grocery list. Having everything mapped out for the week will help you create a grocery list with purpose and ensure you include everything you need.

Daily Meal Planning

Work with a dietitian to fill in the number of daily servings that are right for you from each food group below.

Aim for this much each day:



Servings
of vegetables



Servings
of protein



Servings
of fat-free or
low-fat dairy



Servings of
whole grain



Servings
of fruit

Example Meals

Monday	Breakfast: Quaker® Oats with Greek yogurt, Bare® Banana Chips and berries	Lunch: Roasted chicken over spinach with cubed roasted sweet potatoes and balsamic dressing	Dinner: Birthday dinner out with friends	Snacks: Off the Eaten Path® Chickpea Veggie Crisps + hummus
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Notes

Personalized recommendations courtesy of: _____

Week Of

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				