



## Meal Planning 101

Do you arrive home most days feeling ravenous but too tired to cook? Are you frustrated with spending so much money for restaurant or take-out meals? Do you wander aimlessly in the aisles of the supermarket filling your cart with impulse buys? If any of this sounds familiar, read on . . .

Having a supply of simple, nutritious foods in your cupboards, fridge and freezer will allow you to make quick & nutritious meals while staying on your budget. All you need is a little **planning and organization**:

- ❖ **Make a shopping list.** Include items you will need for meals and snacks for a week or 10 days. It's helpful to keep a running list on the fridge and add items as you use them up. Check out store ads for specials but only buy what you need!
- ❖ **Think of 3 or 4 main meals you can make during the week.** Plan on cooking extra portions of some items to use in other meals. For example, cook several chicken breasts at one time to be used in sandwiches, pasta dishes, salads or soups. Cooked meats can be stored safely in the fridge for up to 4 days.
- ❖ **Vary your meals and include different colors, flavor and textures.** Surf the web for recipes; check out: [www.deliciousdecisions.org/cb](http://www.deliciousdecisions.org/cb), [www.mealmakeovermoms.com/recipes](http://www.mealmakeovermoms.com/recipes), [www.mnsu.edu/shs/healtheducation/bmc](http://www.mnsu.edu/shs/healtheducation/bmc), [www.publix.com/aprons/meals/SimpleMeals.do](http://www.publix.com/aprons/meals/SimpleMeals.do) , [www.aicr.org](http://www.aicr.org).
- ❖ **Don't shop when you are hungry!** Have a meal or snack before you hit the supermarket to avoid impulse buys that may be expensive and unhealthy.
- ❖ **Read the food labels.** Look for foods that are low in saturated and trans fats, high in dietary fiber, vitamins and minerals and moderate in calories and sodium. Include **lots** of fruits & vegetables along with some whole grains, lean meats, beans and low-fat dairy. Go easy on "snack" foods like chips, cookies, ice cream and candy. Wash & cut up some fruits & veggies right away so you can easily grab them for a healthy snack.
- ❖ **Share cooking and meals.** Start a "supper club". One day a week have two or three friends or roommates take turns making a main dish and have everyone else bring a side dish or beverage. Meals are generally more pleasant and satisfying when eaten with others.



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