

Planning Your Meals

Planning and shopping are critical aspects of a healthy diet. Planning helps create complete shopping lists so you can avoid the “quick” stops to the store that waste time and money. Planning also helps you organize the best meal for your schedule on any given day. Here are some tips to help you save time and money.

- **Standardize your breakfast and lunches.** One of the easiest ways to be sure that you eat a healthy breakfast and lunch everyday is to PLAN! Get comfortable with about 5 to 7 breakfast and lunch meals that you enjoy and rotate them through your week.
- **Keep healthy snacks available.**
- **Keep a running list on your fridge** to help keep you stocked on the things you know you need. Right when you realize you are out of something you can write it down so you are prepared when you go to the grocery store.
- **Bulk buy to save money.** Usually when you buy bulk at a health food store you can get a discount. Good suggestions for bulk buying include: long storing winter vegetables in the fall (onions, garlic, winter squash, and potatoes) will last 6 to 8 months, whole grains can last up to 1 year in cool, dry container, and beans can last up to 2 years in cool, dry container. Join a food-buying club (or just get a group of friends together) to share items.
- **Bulk cook** when a meal or a “non-rushed” day lends the opportunity. Dishes that tend to freeze and re-heat well for a day you need a quick meal include: lasagna, muffins, waffles, small breads, pizza shells, soups, burritos, pot pies, and casseroles. (more)
- **Have a list of “no-brainer” healthy meals** that you and your family enjoy. With these types of meals you tend to have the ingredients always available (or ingredients that will work) and they require minimal preparation time and effort.