



Meal Planning



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER



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For more health information, go to wexnermedical.osu.edu/patiented or contact the Library for Health Information at 614-293-3707 or health-info@osu.edu.

Meal Planning

Meal planning involves planning for meals and snacks to eat at home or take with you when away from home. This will help ensure you are getting the right balance of foods and control the portions that you eat to help you meet your health goals. There is no right way to meal plan. It is about finding the plan that works best for you. Meal planning is a life skill: our bodies need fuel (food) multiple times each day and we need to know how to feed ourselves and our families.

Eating pattern

Your eating pattern is how you eat and drink, day in and day out. It includes:

- The types of foods and drinks you eat.
- The amount of food you eat.
- The times of day you eat.
- The number of meals and snacks you eat each day.
- The balance between the calories you eat (energy in) and the energy you burn (energy out).

😊 Examples of Healthy Eating Patterns

- Eating 3 meals and 1 to 2 snacks a day.
- Eating fruits, vegetables, whole grains, dairy, lean proteins, and healthy fats each day.
- Limiting processed or convenience foods, such as pre-packaged meals, lunch meats, and baked goods.
- Drinking sugar free and caffeine free drinks, such as water.
- Balancing your calorie intake with your energy needs.

☹️ Examples of Unhealthy Eating Patterns

- Skipping meals often.
- Eating few fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Eating a lot of processed or convenience foods.
- Drinking sugar sweetened or high caffeine beverages regularly.
- Eating more calories than are burned, which leads to weight gain.

No matter what type of eating pattern you have, you can always take small steps toward a healthier eating pattern. Meal planning can help you with this.



Benefits

Meal planning does take time, but so does:

- Going out to eat.
- Waiting in the drive-thru line.
- Waiting for pizza delivery.

The benefits of meal planning outweigh the time involved. Some benefits include:

- Save time and money – avoid impulse buys and eat out less.
- Get rid of last minute stress and decision making. (“What’s for dinner?”)
- Make shopping easier and always have what you need.
- Cook less often.
- Increased variety in food choices.
- Less food waste.
- Helps you reach your health goals.

Your health is worth it!

Getting started

It is okay to start slow. Start by planning 2 to 3 dinner meals per week. Once this becomes a set habit, increase to 5 to 7 meals per week.

- Decide how often you want to plan.
- Decide how many meals you want to plan.
- Get your family involved in meal planning.
- Keep your grocery list out and update it as needed.
- Make a list of your favorite meals, snacks, and recipes.
- Make a list of easy meals that you can prepare without a recipe, such as salads, sandwiches, and rice bowls. Use it for backup meals, as needed.
- Keep variety and flexibility in mind. Look for options that are easy to adapt like casseroles, soups, stir-fries, or bowl dishes.

- Keep busy days simple:
 - Look for recipes with few steps and basic ingredients.
 - Consider having “cold” meals or leftovers on nights that are too busy to cook.
- Plan more elaborate meals for when you have more time and can get the family involved in cooking.
- Consider batch cooking different parts of your meals (protein, vegetables, whole grains/starches), and then mix and match throughout the week with different sauces for different flavors.
- Use the “cook once, eat twice” philosophy to help cut down on food cost at the grocery store and to make meal planning easy for the week. See page 25 for ideas.

The Basics



Calendar Check

- Look at what nights you have time to cook and what nights you just have time to reheat leftovers.

Shop Your Pantry

- Use current pantry items as the starting point of healthy meals.

Think Seasonal

- What fresh produce is available this time of year?
- Is it salad season or soup weather?

Mix Things Up

- Keep the menu interesting by planning some meatless meals or having breakfast for dinner.
- Alternate new recipes and old favorites.

Beginning of the Week

- Prepare and cook vegetables and protein.
- Prepare salads and ingredients.
- Prepare marinades or sauces.

Mid-Week

- Check your ingredients. Do you have enough to get through the rest of the week?
- Prepare salad again if needed.
- Is there anything you need to take out of the freezer to thaw?
- Update your grocery list as needed for the next week.

The 5 food groups



1. **Fruits** – berries, apples, bananas, oranges, melons
2. **Vegetables** – broccoli, spinach, carrots, peppers, squash, zucchini
3. **Whole grains** – bread, pasta, rice, cereal, tortillas

4. **Dairy** – milk, yogurt, and nondairy milk alternatives, like almond milk
5. **Protein** – meat, fish, poultry, eggs, beans, nuts, soy, cheese

Each food group is important because there are vitamins, minerals, protein, carbohydrates, fats, and other nutrients found in each group that are not found in the other groups.

For example:

- Most fruits are high in vitamin C, but they are low in protein.
- Meat is high in protein, but it is low in vitamin C.

By eating a variety of foods, your body gets a variety of nutrients. If you skip or only eat a few foods in a food group, you miss out on nutrients.

A note about vitamin and mineral supplements

Some people take vitamin supplements to avoid being too low or deficient in nutrients. For example, pregnant women cannot get enough iron during pregnancy from their food alone. For this reason, they should take a prenatal vitamin, so their iron does not get too low.

Vitamins and supplements are not meant to be the main source of where you get your nutrients. Your body absorbs nutrients better from food than from supplements. If you could be healthy by just taking some daily vitamins, there would be little reason to eat healthy food. However, there are many differences between the nutrients in food and pills.

Food will always win!

Use Your Plate to Eat Healthy



The Plate Method

The Plate Method is a simple way to guide your eating choices.

Eat at least 3 meals and 1 or 2 (100 to 200 calorie) snacks a day.

At meals, use a 9-inch plate and:

- Fill $\frac{1}{2}$ of the plate with **non-starchy vegetables** and/or **fruits**.
- Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of the plate with **whole grains** or **starchy vegetables**.
- Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of the plate with **protein**.

Eat a serving of **fruit** or **dairy** (milk, yogurt) for a snack or add a serving to your meals.

Include **healthy fats**, like olive oil, avocado, nuts, and seeds, with meals and snacks.

Talk to your healthcare provider about meal planning if you have special dietary needs or restrictions.

Food ideas

1. Fill ½ of the plate with **non-starchy vegetables** and/or **fruits**.

- **Non-starchy vegetables** like:

Asparagus



Beets



Bell Peppers



Broccoli



Brussels Sprouts



Cabbage



Carrots



Cauliflower



Green Beans



Mushrooms



Salad Greens



Sugar Snap Peas



Tomatoes



Zucchini



• Fruits like:

Apple



Banana



Blueberries



Blackberries



Cantaloupe



Fruit, Canned



Fruit, Dried



Fruit, Juice



Grapes



Orange



Pear



Pineapple



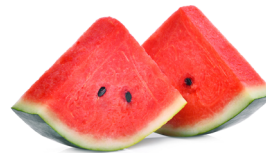
Raspberries



Strawberries



Watermelon



2. Fill ¼ of the plate with **whole grains** or **starchy vegetables** like:

Brown Rice



Corn



Naan Bread



Oatmeal



Pancake



Peas



Potato With Skin



Quinoa



Sweet Potato With Skin



Tortilla, 6-inch



Tortilla Chips



Whole Grain Bread



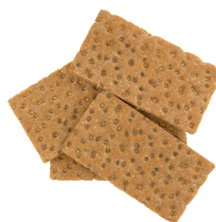
Whole Grain Cereal



Whole Wheat Couscous



Whole Wheat Crackers



Whole Wheat Pasta



3. Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of the plate with **protein** like:

Beans



**Beef, Lean Cuts,
Fat Removed**



Cheese, Low Fat



**Cottage Cheese,
Low Fat**



Egg



Fish



Lentils



Nut Butter



Nuts



Pork, Loin Cuts



Poultry, No Skin



Tofu, Soft



Tuna, Canned



Choose low fat dairy products

Eat a serving of dairy for a snack or add a serving to your meals. Healthy choices include milk, lactose free milk, fortified soy milk, and yogurt.

Milk, low fat or fat free



Yogurt (Regular or Greek), Light or Plain



Keep added fats to small amounts

Choose mostly plant-based fats, such as olive oil, avocado, nuts, and seeds.

Limit animal-based fats, such as full fat dairy products (whole milk, heavy cream, butter, full fat yogurt, cheese, cream cheese, ice cream) and red meat (beef, pork, lamb).

Drink sugar free beverages

Beverages sweetened with sugar add too much sugar to our diets if eaten regularly.

Aim for at least 8, 8-ounce glasses of sugar free beverages (water, tea, and coffee) a day.

Drink mostly water, which is sugar free and essential for your body's cells, tissues, and organs.

Water



Tea



Coffee



Sample menu using the Plate Method

Breakfast



Stuffed omelet with tomatoes, red bell pepper, and broccoli with whole wheat toast and berries

Lunch



Low fat chicken salad on lettuce with whole wheat crackers and sugar snap peas, celery, and carrots

Snack



Low fat milk and an orange

Dinner



Lean beef steak, plain baked potato, and broccoli

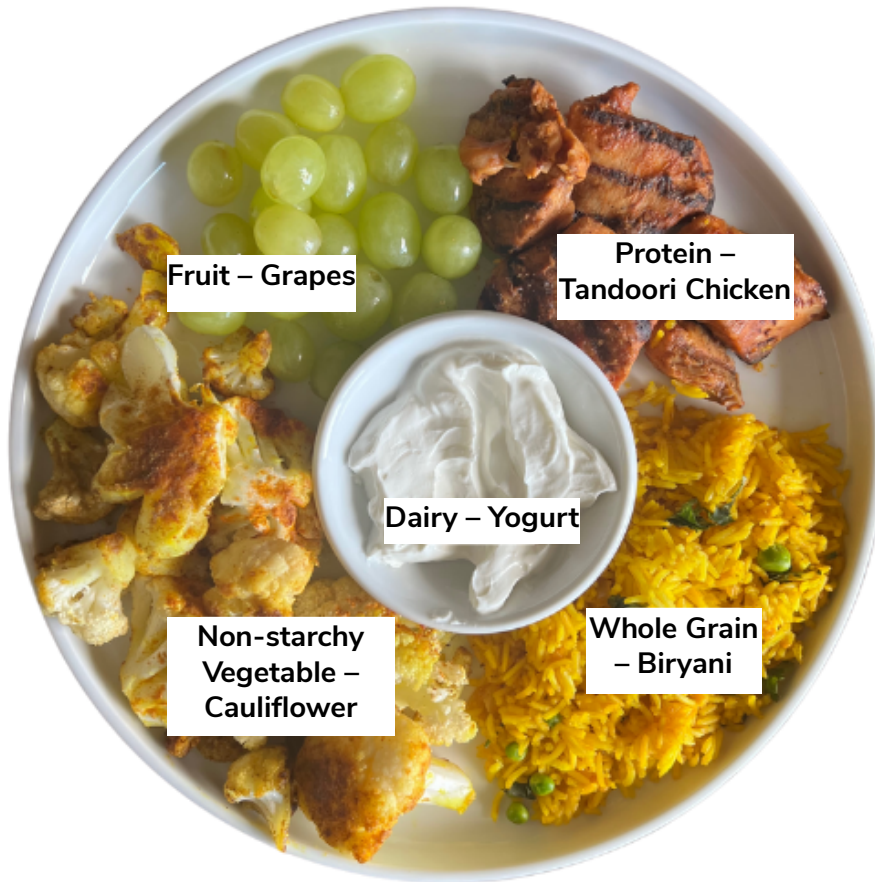
Snack



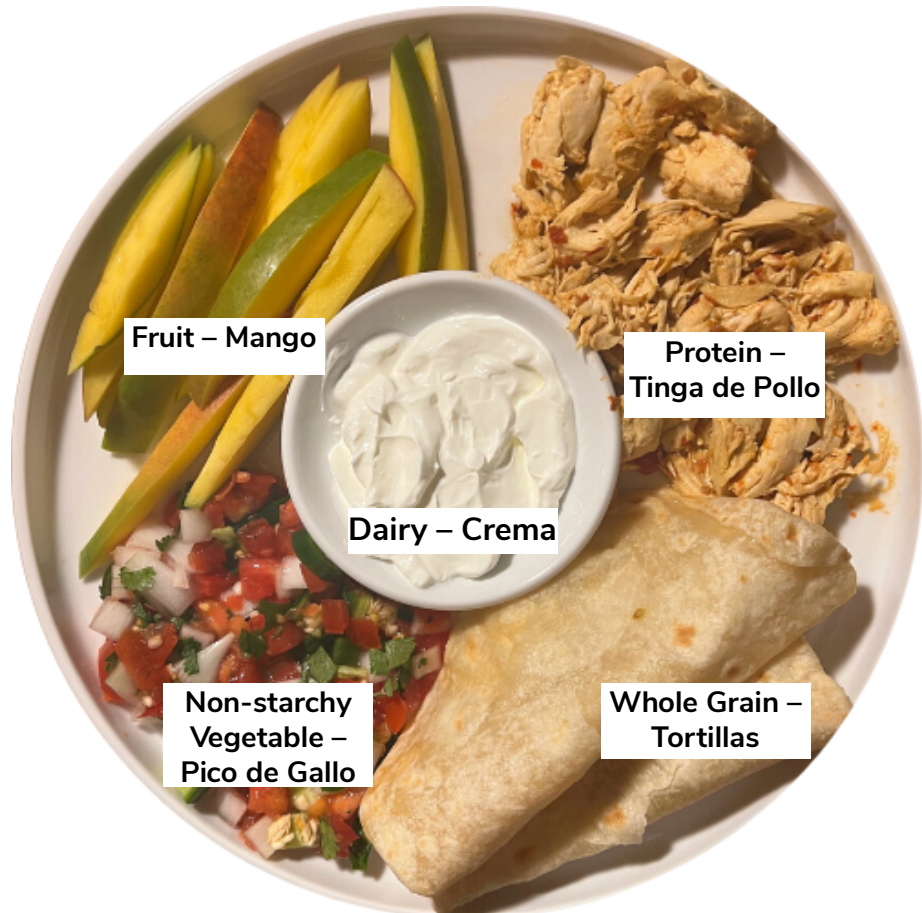
Strawberries and light strawberry Greek yogurt

More meal ideas

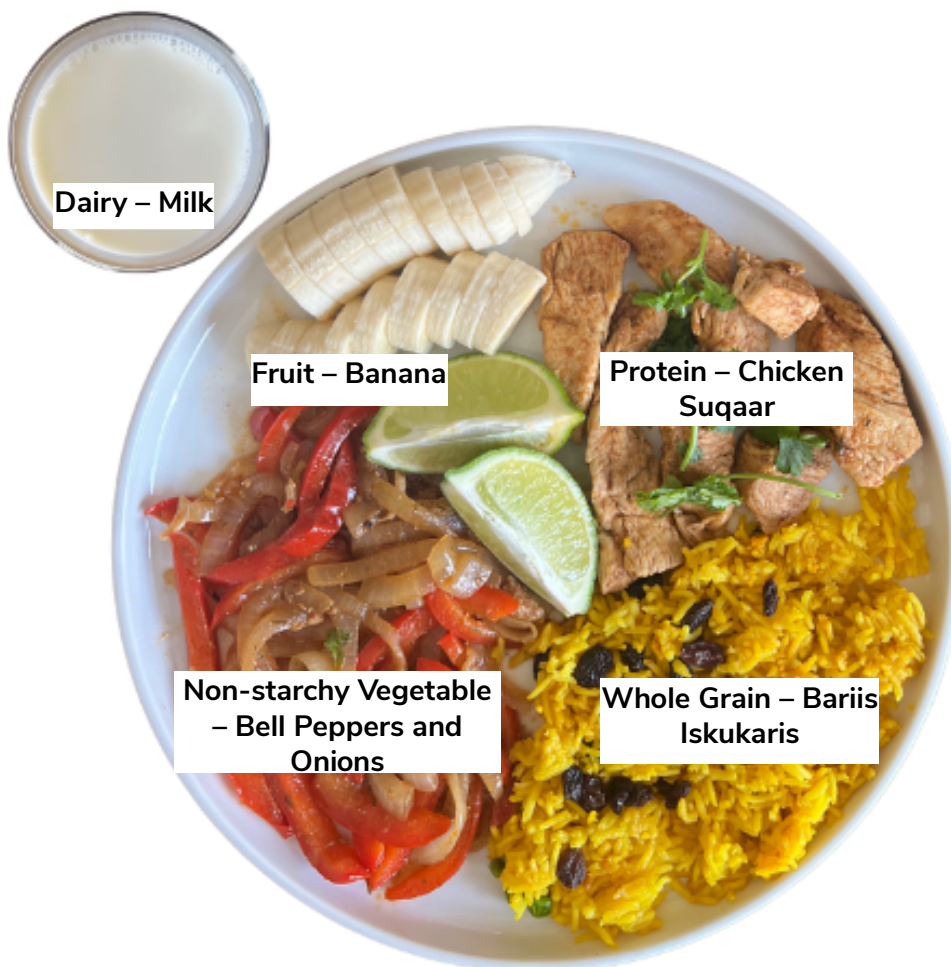
Indian



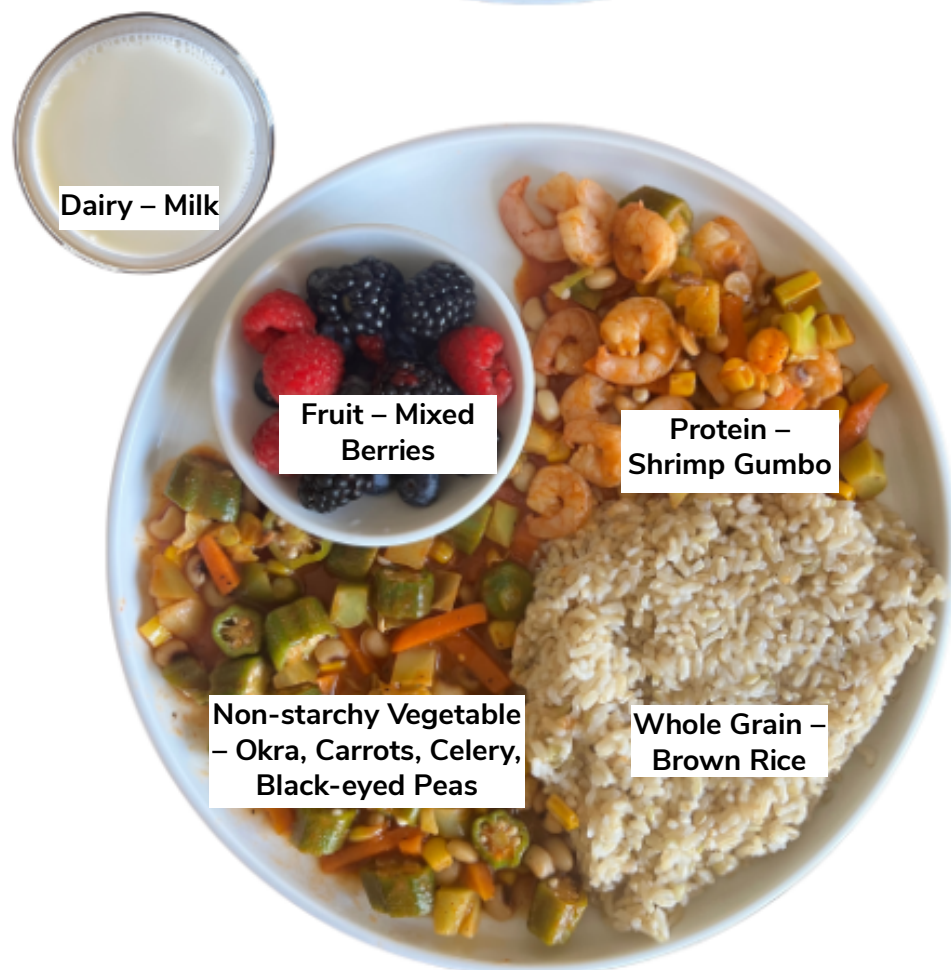
Mexican



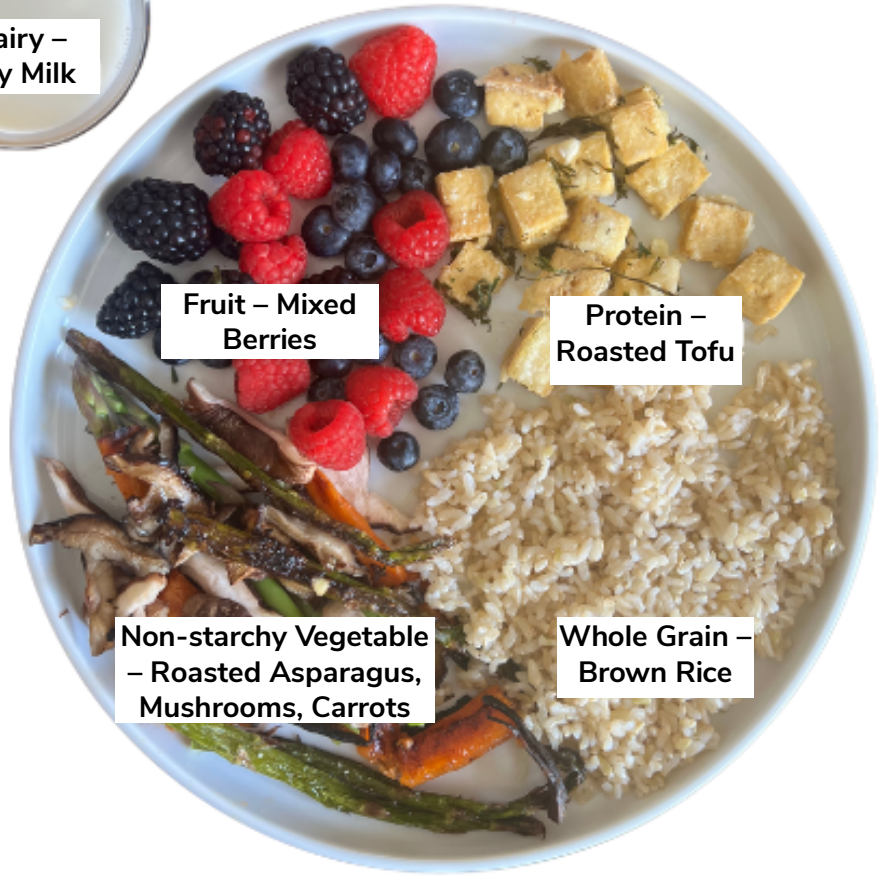
Somalian



Soul Food

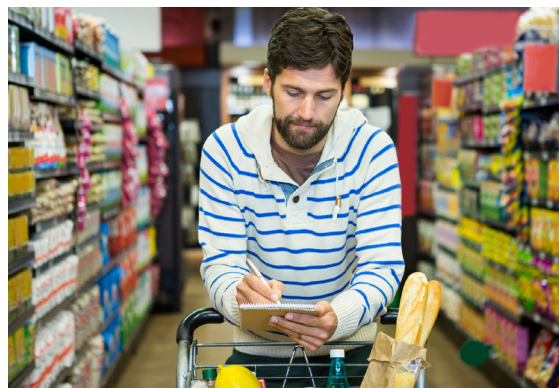


**Vegan/
Vegetarian**



Meal Planning Tool

Meal planning starts at the grocery store! Make your weekly grocery shopping list when you plan your meals and snacks. Make copies of the meal planning tool on this page or use it to make your own tool to plan your meals and snacks for the week. Then, organize your grocery list by sections (fresh, meat, dry, dairy, frozen, etc.) to make trips to the grocery store quick and easy.



My meal plan

Day of the Week	Breakfast	Lunch	Snack	Dinner	Snack
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Saturday					
Sunday					

My grocery list

Fresh

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Dairy

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Meat

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Frozen

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Dry

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Other

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Go-To Grocery List

Have these foods on hand to make planning your meals and snacks easy.

Fruits	Vegetables	Whole Grains
<p>Choose 3 to 4 fresh or frozen fruit sources like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Apples <input type="checkbox"/> Strawberries <input type="checkbox"/> Oranges <input type="checkbox"/> Bananas <input type="checkbox"/> Cantaloupe <input type="checkbox"/> Grapes <input type="checkbox"/> Grapefruit <input type="checkbox"/> Blueberries <input type="checkbox"/> Lemons <input type="checkbox"/> Kiwi 	<p>Choose 2 to 3 fresh or frozen vegetable sources like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Broccoli <input type="checkbox"/> Carrots <input type="checkbox"/> Cauliflower <input type="checkbox"/> Asparagus <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed greens <input type="checkbox"/> Bell peppers <input type="checkbox"/> Cucumber <input type="checkbox"/> Zucchini <input type="checkbox"/> Celery <input type="checkbox"/> Brussels sprouts 	<p>Choose 2 to 3 whole grain sources like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Brown rice <input type="checkbox"/> Whole grain pasta <input type="checkbox"/> Whole grain bread <input type="checkbox"/> Rolled oats <input type="checkbox"/> Whole wheat bagels <input type="checkbox"/> Quinoa <input type="checkbox"/> Whole grain/corn/low carb tortillas <input type="checkbox"/> Whole grain crackers <input type="checkbox"/> Whole grain tortilla chips
Protein/Dairy	Healthy Fats	Dips, Spreads, and Sauces
<p>Choose 3 to 4 protein sources like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Chicken breast <input type="checkbox"/> Turkey breast <input type="checkbox"/> Eggs <input type="checkbox"/> Salmon <input type="checkbox"/> Sirloin steak <input type="checkbox"/> Flank steak <input type="checkbox"/> Lentils <input type="checkbox"/> Chickpeas <input type="checkbox"/> Greek yogurt <input type="checkbox"/> String cheese <input type="checkbox"/> Edamame <input type="checkbox"/> Tuna, canned <input type="checkbox"/> Cold water fish, such as salmon <input type="checkbox"/> Warm water fish, such as cod 	<p>Choose healthy fats like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Avocado <input type="checkbox"/> Nuts <input type="checkbox"/> Seeds <input type="checkbox"/> Olive oil <input type="checkbox"/> Canola oil <input type="checkbox"/> Avocado oil 	<p>Look for dips, spreads, and sauces with no sugar added.</p> <p>Choose 3 to 4 sources like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Hummus <input type="checkbox"/> Tomato paste <input type="checkbox"/> Salsa <input type="checkbox"/> Guacamole <input type="checkbox"/> Peanut butter <input type="checkbox"/> Pesto sauce <input type="checkbox"/> Vinaigrette salad dressing

3 Day Sample Menu

Day 1	
Breakfast	<p>Meal: Breakfast Oats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup whole grain oatmeal (cooked with water) with ¼ cup unsalted mixed nuts and ¾ cup berries <p>Drink: 8 ounces plain coffee</p>
Lunch	<p>Meal: Spinach Quinoa Salad with Grilled Chicken</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 ounces grilled chicken on a bed of 1 cup spinach and 1 cup of quinoa topped with ½ cup of raspberries, 2 tablespoons of sliced almonds, and 2 tablespoon of light Greek yogurt dressing <p>Drink: 8 ounces water</p>
Snack	<p>Snack: Celery and Peanut Butter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup celery topped with 2 tablespoons peanut butter <p>Drink: 8 ounces fat free milk</p>
Dinner	<p>Meal: Grilled Chicken Tacos</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 ounces grilled chicken breast with ¼ cup of black beans, ¼ cup cooked bell peppers, ¼ cup chopped red onion, ¼ cup cherry tomatoes, ½ ounce cheddar cheese divided between 2 whole wheat tortillas • ½ cup brown rice • 10 to 15 tortilla chips with 1 cup salsa <p>Drink: 8 ounces water</p>
Snack	<p>Snack: Popcorn and Cheese</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 cups popcorn with less than 3 grams of fat • 1 ounce string cheese <p>Drink: 8 ounces water</p>

Day 2

Breakfast	<p>Meal: Bagel and Egg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ½ whole wheat bagel with 1 tablespoon light cream cheese• 1 hard boiled egg <p>Drink: 8 ounces plain tea</p>
Lunch	<p>Meal: Turkey Wraps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 ounces all natural turkey breast, ¼ avocado, ½ cup of chopped romaine lettuce, 2 slices of tomatoes, and 2 tablespoons of hummus wrapped in a large whole wheat tortilla wrap; slice wrap in half to create 2 wraps!• 10 to 12 baby carrots and ½ cup fat free ranch dressing <p>Drink: 8 ounces fat free milk</p>
Snack	<p>Snack: Pear and Nuts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ½ large pear• ¼ cup walnuts <p>Drink: 8 ounces water</p>
Dinner	<p>Meal: Asian Shrimp Bowl</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 ounces cooked shrimp mixed with ¼ cup cooked broccoli florets, ¼ cup steamed carrots, ¼ cup sliced mushrooms, cooked with 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil• Sauce: ⅔ cup chicken broth, ⅓ cup coconut amino acids, 1 tablespoon rice vinegar, 2 tablespoons corn starch• 1 cup brown rice <p>Drink: 8 ounces water</p>
Snack	<p>Snack: Fruit and Cottage Cheese</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ½ cup pineapple mixed with ½ cup low fat cottage cheese <p>Drink: 8 oz glass of fat free milk</p>

Day 3

Breakfast	<p>Meal: Avocado Toast with an Egg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 slice of whole wheat toast with ½ smashed avocado and 1 fried egg on top; drizzle with hot sauce and a dash of salt and pepper• 1 cup of sautéed spinach <p>Drink: 8 ounces fat free milk</p>
Lunch	<p>Meal: Vegan Mediterranean Bowl</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ¼ cup soft tofu on a bed of ½ cup brown rice mixed with ¼ cup red onion, ¼ cup sliced cucumbers, ¼ cup shredded lettuce, and ½ cup hummus; sprinkle with 2 tablespoons feta cheese <p>Drink: 8 ounces water</p>
Snack	<p>Snack: Berries and Yogurt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ¾ cup berries mixed with 1 container (6 ounces) plain nonfat Greek yogurt <p>Drink: 8 ounces water</p>
Dinner	<p>Meal: American Cheeseburger</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 ounces lean hamburger meat on 1 whole grain hamburger bun topped with 1 ounce low fat American cheese, lettuce, onion, tomato, and 1 tablespoon of ketchup• ½ cup cooked green beans• 10 to 15 baked sweet potato fries <p>Drink: 8 ounces water</p>
Snack	<p>Snack: Apple and Peanut Butter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small apple (sliced) topped with 2 tablespoons peanut butter <p>Drink: 8 ounces fat free milk</p>

Lunch Bento Box Ideas

Using a bento style lunch box is a great way to plan healthy meals when you are away from home. What to include in your box:

- **Fruits**, such as apples, bananas, berries, cantaloupe, cherries, dates, grapes, kiwi, mango, oranges, pears, pineapple, and watermelon
- **Non-starchy vegetables**, such as bell peppers, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery sticks, jicama, salad greens, sugar snap peas, and tomatoes
- **Whole grains/starchy vegetables**, such as bread, corn, couscous, crackers, pasta, peas, pita, potato, quinoa, rice, sweet potato, tortilla, tortilla chips, and wraps
- **Lean proteins/dairy**, such as beans, edamame, lean meats, low fat cheese, cottage cheese, hard boiled eggs, fish, lentils, nuts, nut butters, pork, poultry, soy/tofu, tuna (canned), and yogurt
- **Healthy fats**, such as olives, avocado, nuts, seeds, nut butters, liquid and plant-based oils like extra virgin olive oil, and salad dressings, such as vinaigrettes like balsamic or oil and vinegar



Lunch box ideas

Portion sizes will vary depending on your calorie level. Talk to your healthcare team about the amount of calories you need daily, or use the serving sizes listed with the foods in the “Use Your Plate to Eat Healthy” handout on pages 6 to 15 or on food packaging as your guide.

Food Group	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
Fruits	Grapes	Berries	Apple slices	Cherries	Mango
Non-starchy Vegetable	Carrots and spinach	Cucumbers	Jicama sticks	Cherry tomatoes	Sugar snap peas
Whole Grains/ Starchy Vegetables	Whole wheat wrap	English muffin	Tortilla chips	Brown rice	Graham crackers
Lean Proteins/ Dairy	Ham and low fat cheese	Canadian bacon	Ground turkey with taco seasoning	Grilled Chicken	Hard boiled egg
Healthy Fats	Almonds	Low fat cream cheese	Avocado	Walnuts	Sunflower seeds
Condiments (optional)	Mustard and pickle chips	No sugar added jelly or jam	Salsa	Low sodium soy sauce	Apple butter or Nutella

Equipment

- Meal prep containers with 3 compartments (glass or plastic)
- or -
- Rectangular containers plus muffin paper cups, parchment paper, or mini containers to use as dividers
- Condiment containers for storing liquids like salad dressing
- Utensils and napkins

Tips for keeping your box as fresh as possible

- To kill any mold on berries that could cause them to spoil:
 1. Gently wash them with 3 parts cold water to 1 part white vinegar. For example: 1½ cups cold water and ½ cup white vinegar.
 2. Rinse them well with cold water.
 3. Air or pat dry.
 4. Store them in the fridge in a container lined with dry paper towels.
- Dry your fruits and vegetables before adding them to your box.
- Keep salad greens away from liquids.
- Keep chips, crackers, and breads separate from vegetables.
- Keep condiments, such as salad dressing, in containers and add them right before serving.
- If packing cooked foods, make sure that they have cooled down to room temperature before portioning out and putting lids on. If you put a tight fitting lid on still warm food, condensation will form under the lid and make the food soggy.
- Pack your food as tightly as possible so that it does not shift around.

My lunch box worksheet – What do I like?

Food Group	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
Fruits					
Non-Starchy Vegetables					
Whole Grains/ Starchy Vegetables					
Lean Proteins/ Dairy					
Healthy Fats					
Condiments (Optional)					

Breakfast Bento Box Ideas

Egg Bites with Strawberries and Nuts	Eggs, Orange, and Yogurt Box
<p>Ingredients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 eggs, large • 1 tablespoon Parmesan cheese, grated • Dash of garlic salt • 1 cup strawberries, fresh • 2 tablespoons almonds <p>Directions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. 2. Whisk eggs in a bowl, then add in cheese and seasoning. 3. Pour evenly into muffin tins. 4. Bake for 20 minutes. 5. Have strawberries and nuts on the side. 	<p>Ingredients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 eggs, large • 1 yogurt, flavored with less than 15 grams of sugar per serving, 2%, Greek, single serving container • 1 orange, medium • 2 tablespoons nuts <p>Directions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hard boil eggs. 2. Have yogurt, fruit, and nuts on the side.
Granola and Fruit Parfait	Peanut Butter and Jelly Box
<p>Ingredients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ cup strawberries, fresh • ½ cup blueberries, fresh • 1 yogurt, plain, Greek, 2%, single serving container • ¼ cup granola <p>Directions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Layer or add fruit and granola on top of yogurt and enjoy. 2. You may switch out plain yogurt for flavored yogurt if it has less than 10 grams of sugar per serving. 	<p>Ingredients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 egg, large • 1 cup grapes, red • 1 slice whole grain bread • 2 tablespoons peanut butter • 1 tablespoon low sugar jelly <p>Directions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hard boil egg. 2. Toast bread, if desired. Spread peanut butter and jelly on toast. 3. Have hard boiled egg and grapes on the side.
Mini Waffles, Egg, and Nuts	Yogurt, Strawberries, and Almonds
<p>Ingredients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 egg, large • 1 serving mini waffles • 2 tablespoons nuts • 1 cup strawberries, fresh <p>Directions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hard boil egg. 2. Cook waffles. Top with strawberries and nuts or have on the side. 	<p>Ingredients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 egg, large • 1 cup strawberries, fresh • ¼ cup almonds • 1 yogurt, plain, Greek, 2%, single-serving container <p>Directions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hard boil egg. 2. Layer strawberries and almonds on yogurt, if desired.

Cook Once, Eat Twice

Use 1 protein to help plan multiple meals for the week.

Roasted or rotisserie chicken

First Meal

- Roasted chicken, whole grain rice (such as brown, red, black, or wild rice), and steamed grilled vegetables.

Second Meal

Chop or shred chicken to be used in 1 or more of these meals:

- Put cold or warm on a salad with chopped vegetables and light salad dressing.
- Add taco seasoning, heat, and put in small whole wheat tortilla. Add leftover or fresh chopped veggies, as desired.
- Stir fry with frozen veggies and put over reheated leftover rice.

Lean ground beef or turkey

First Meal

Hamburger or turkey burger patty, salad with chopped veggies and light salad dressing, and fruit (fresh or canned in own juice or light syrup).

Second Meal

Crumble leftover burger patties to be used in 1 or more of these meals:

- Add to chili.
- Make a homemade pizza. Use a whole wheat or cauliflower pizza crust, or light multigrain English muffins. Top crust with pizza sauce, crumbled leftover ground beef or turkey, leftover chopped veggies, and low fat shredded mozzarella cheese.
- Add to taco skillet meal with taco seasoning, corn, black beans, and salsa. Serve with 10 to 15 tortilla chips (check food label for serving).

Pork loin roast (cooked in crock-pot or pressure cooker)

First Meal

Pork roast, steamed mixed cauliflower and broccoli, and small sweet potato.

Second Meal

Chop or shred pork to use in 1 or more of these meals:

- Add BBQ sauce and reheat with leftover veggies. Add as topping to reheated leftover sweet potato or new baked white or sweet potato.
- Make a homemade pizza. Use a whole wheat or cauliflower pizza crust, or light multigrain English muffins. Top crust with BBQ sauce, shredded leftover pork, and low fat shredded mozzarella or pepper jack cheese.
- Add fajita seasonings and heat. Add to a tortilla with low fat cheese and salsa.

Black bean soup

First Meal

Black bean soup, salad with chopped veggies and light salad dressing, and 10 to 15 tortilla chips (check food label for serving).

Second Meal

Use leftover black bean soup in 1 or more of these meals:

- Drain soup (do not heat) and mix with corn. Put over leftover salad.
- Add to quinoa, garlic, and low fat cheese to make a casserole.
- Drain, reheat, and use in a whole wheat tortilla with vegetables, salsa, and light sour cream or guacamole.

Healthy Snacks

Snacking can be a part of a healthy diet, ensuring your body gets the energy it needs every 3 to 5 hours. A snack, as opposed to a treat, is a “mini meal” meant to provide nutrients your body needs. **Snacks that combine fruits, vegetables, or whole grains with protein and that are low in sugar are better at controlling appetite.**



Create a healthy snack

Choose 1 food item from the fruit/vegetable/whole grain list and 1 food item from the protein list to create a healthy, balanced snack, such as 1 cup non-starchy vegetables and $\frac{1}{3}$ cup hummus.

Fruit/Vegetable/Whole Grain

- 1 small apple
- $\frac{1}{2}$ large banana or pear
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup blueberries
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fruit, such as grapes, pineapple, or peaches
- 2 tablespoons raisins
- 1 cup non-starchy vegetables such as carrots, cucumber, sugar snap peas, and bell pepper strips
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked oatmeal
- 5 to 6 whole wheat crackers
- 3 (2.5 inch) graham crackers
- $\frac{1}{2}$ whole wheat pita
- 1 slice whole wheat toast
- $\frac{1}{2}$ whole wheat toasted English muffin
- 1 to 2 rice cakes
- 3 cups popcorn with less than 3 grams of fat per serving

Protein

- 1 tablespoon natural peanut butter or other nut butter
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup tuna, chicken, or egg salad made with light mayonnaise
- 1 hard-boiled egg
- 1 scrambled egg
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup nuts, such as walnuts and almonds
- 1 ounce cheese
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup low fat cottage cheese
- 6 ounces plain or light yogurt
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup hummus
- 2 to 3 slices of low fat lunch meat
- 1 ounce jerky
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup roasted chickpeas
- 1 ounce of seeds, such as sunflower and pumpkin



Meal Planning Tools and Services

Meal planning resources

Free Resources

- American Diabetes Association, Diabetes Food Hub at diabetesfoodhub.org
- EatingWell magazine at eatingwell.com
- Eat This Much at eatthismuch.com
- Prepear at prepear.com

Fee-Based Resources

- The Fresh 20 at thefresh20.com
- Emeals at emeals.com
- Platejoy Health at platejoy.com
- Plan to Eat at plantoeat.com

Meal delivery services

There are many meal delivery services that ship meal kits and/or ready-to-eat meals. Visit these or other services to learn more:

- BistroMD at bistromd.com
- Blue Apron at blueapron.com
- Clean Eatz Kitchen at cleaneatzkitchen.com
- Daily Harvest at daily-harvest.com
- Factor at factor75.com
- Fit Fresh at fitfreshfast.com
- HelloFresh at hellofresh.com
- Home Chef at homechef.com
- Hungryroot at hungryroot.com
- Magic Kitchen at magickitchen.com
- Purple Carrot at purplecarrot.com
- Splendid Spoon at splendidspoon.com
- Sunbasket at sunbasket.com
- Territory Foods at territoryfoods.com



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