



## Preparing Meals for the Week

Meal planning is a good way to start making healthier food choices. It can help you have more control over your caloric intake and help you maintain healthy eating goals as well as guarantee a more nutritious, well-balanced diet. A great way to start meal planning is to write a list of your favorite foods and meals then write a 1-month rotation of your favorite recipes onto a calendar. Remember to include a variety of food groups in each of your meals. Each week create a grocery list including all the ingredients you will need to make your meals for the week. Making a grocery list before you go to the store is a good way to prevent making impulse decisions and buying junk food.

Another great consideration is keeping healthy snacks such as fruits, veggies and protein choices (like nuts, cheese, and yogurt) stocked in your fridge and cupboards. It is easier to make better decisions when you have a good variety of healthy options available.

Example of a Weekly Meal Planner:

|           | Monday                                   | Tuesday                         | Wednesday                                   | Thursday                   | Friday                    | Saturday                                       | Sunday                                            |
|-----------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Breakfast | Cereal with milk                         | Toast with peanut butter        | Oatmeal with raisins                        | Yogurt and fresh fruit     | Cereal with milk          | Whole wheat English muffin with jam            | Pancakes with syrup                               |
| Lunch     | Turkey and cheese sandwich with an apple | Grilled chicken and fruit salad | Cheese and crackers with carrots and hummus | Grilled chicken with salad | Pasta salad with broccoli | Peanut butter and jelly sandwich with a banana | Cheese and crackers with carrots and hummus       |
| Snack     | Carrots and hummus                       | Broccoli florets                | Pear                                        | Almonds                    | Apple and peanut butter   | Mango                                          | Ants on a log (celery, peanut butter and raisins) |



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|        |                                    |       |                                        |                                  |                                      |              |                                  |
|--------|------------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|
| Dinner | Meatloaf<br>with<br>green<br>beans | Chili | Chicken fajitas<br>with black<br>beans | Steamed<br>fish with<br>broccoli | Hamburger<br>with grilled<br>veggies | Pizza night! | Tacos with side<br>of brown rice |
|--------|------------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|

**Plan and Prep:**

The two P’s for successful meal planning are **plan** and **prep**. Plan your meals for the week as discussed above. Then take the time once a week to prep your food. This includes washing/peeling/chopping/cutting your fresh fruit and veggies so they can be available later when you are preparing a meal or to eat as a healthy snack.

**Resources**

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

[http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy\\_eating/meals.html](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating/meals.html)

Healthy Eating – Vermont Department of Health

<http://healthvermont.gov/eatforhealth/index.aspx>

Harvard School of Public Health

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/healthy-eating-plate/>

