

## Meal Planning

Meal planning is asking “*What’s for dinner?*” once, for the whole week. Shopping and prepping completes the plan. Benefits include:

- An easy way to make eating heart healthy
- It saves time and money
- It reduces stress

Meal planning can seem overwhelming at first. It involves work up front. Then, it flows for the rest of the week. Follow these three easy steps:

1. Decide on dinner meals using recipes available.
2. Make a grocery list and shop.
3. Prep your ingredients.

### **Let’s get started. Start slowly.**

**You can add more to your plan as you get used to this routine.**

First, grab a sheet of paper. Write down the days of the week.

- Write out ideas of what you want to eat each day. Start with breakfast. Then do lunch. Then plan out dinner meals.
- Keep breakfast and lunch quick and easy. Basic choices may include cereal, sandwich, yogurt and fruit.

Next, look at your schedule that week.

- What day does an activity or routine make cooking from scratch difficult? Mark those busy nights with an “x”.
- Choose quick and easy dinners or leftovers those nights.

Then, once meals are chosen, make a grocery list.

- Check your fridge and pantry to see what you need.
- Write these items on a list. Shop from this list.
- Set aside an hour after shopping to prep some foods.
- Chop up veggies, portion meat and freeze.

Things to keep in mind:

- Start with recipes you know. Add one new recipe each week.
- Pick recipes that you want to eat. It's easier to put in the effort if you are looking forward to the result.
- Keep it flexible. Some nights things can get chaotic. You may veer off course. Just get back to your meal plan the next night.

**Remember heart healthy eating is a process not a project!**

### Sample Meal Plan

This is an example only. Please consult with your dietitian to customize. Recipes for examples marked with an asterisk are found on our website:

[smgh.ca/patient-care-programs/regional-cardiac-care-centre/cardiac-rehabilitation/](http://smgh.ca/patient-care-programs/regional-cardiac-care-centre/cardiac-rehabilitation/)

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Supper	Snacks
Monday	Blueberry bran muffin*  3 tbsp all natural nut butter  1 cup skim milk  1 orange	Heart healthy hummus* wrap  Red lentil soup*  ¾ cup plain yogurt  1 banana	Oven fried buttermilk chicken*  Sweet potato fries*  Brussel sprout and cabbage slaw*	Chocolate avocado pudding*  1 cup skim milk  1 apple