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:


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