



Your guide to planning meals and eating well

Create quick, easy, and nourishing meals for the whole family.

Create a healthy meal planning strategy

01 Review your calendar

- Make note of planned activities and meals that will be eaten away from home.
- Create a planning calendar by marking each day as a column and each meal as a row. Fill in any meals that do not need to be planned due to scheduled events.

02 Get input and inspiration

- Ask those in your household for ideas to ensure you accommodate different taste preferences and food allergies.
- Learn strategies for helping your kids eat well from [The FIT Project](#) or the [Ellyn Satter Institute](#).
- Look at cookbooks, magazines, apps, and blogs for new recipes.
- Check out our menu of options for easy breakfasts, packable lunches, and themed dinners.
- For healthful recipes, try [EatingWell](#), [Minimalist Baker](#), or [Real Food R.D.s](#).

03 Establish meals for the week

- As you plan your meals, aim to fill half your plate with fruits and non-starchy vegetables.
- Try to incorporate a mix of [fresh, local produce](#).

04 Take inventory

- Check your pantry and refrigerator to see which ingredients you already have on-hand.

05 Create your grocery list

- Organize your list by the [type of food](#) or layout of your grocery store.
- Download [the Mediterranean Diet Grocery List](#) as a guide. Or create a list in Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets or use an app like [Mealime](#).
- Stay on budget - check your grocery store's weekly flyer to see which items are on sale.
- Save your meal plan and grocery list, so you can repurpose meals that are new favorites.

06 Go grocery shopping

- Shop the produce section and the perimeter of the store and try to minimize time in the aisles with processed foods.
- Navigate environmental and emotional cues by sticking to your list.
- Save time by using grocery pick-up or delivery.

07 Meal prep

- Depending on time and schedules, it may make sense to prep and cook some foods in advance.
- Learn about [meal prep strategies](#) to see if there's a method that works for you.

08 Cook together

- From chopping to stirring, assign tasks to everyone in your family.
- Learn about [kitchen tasks for every age](#).
- Cook mindfully and be curious about the food you are making - take in the sights, sounds, smells, and textures as you prepare your meal.

09 Eat together

- Practice mindful eating - slow down and savor your food.
- Engage in meaningful conversations at the dinner table. Check out [The Family Dinner Project](#) and [TableTopics](#) for ideas.
- Get input on the meal. Consider questions like: Is it a new favorite? What ingredients could make it better? Was it worth your time to prepare it?

10 Store leftovers

- Refrigerate leftovers and enjoy them the next day. Or freeze for a future week!
- Use leftover ingredients in a future meal - try a stir fry or sheet pan meal.



Breakfast 5 Ways

01 Hot cereal with fruit

Start with whole grains, add fruit and then top with nuts or seeds. Try these ideas:

- Oats, strawberries, blueberries, almonds
- Wheat berries, apples, raisins, walnuts
- Quinoa, mango, banana, hemp seeds
- Want something cold? Try overnight oats

02 Toast and nut butter

Start with bread made with whole grains or nut flour, and nut butter, then top with fruit. Try these ideas:

- Whole-wheat toast, almond butter, banana
- Whole-grain English muffin, cashew butter, blueberries
- Whole-wheat toast, peanut butter, apple
- Want something savory? Try toast with avocado!

03 Yogurt and granola

Start with bread made with whole grains or nut flour, and nut butter, then top with fruit. Try these ideas:

- Yogurt, raspberries, blueberries, oat granola
- Yogurt, peaches, bananas, ancient grain granola
- Yogurt, strawberries, kiwi, grain-free granola

04 Smoothie

Start with low-fat milk or a milk alternative and then add fruit and leafy greens. Try these ideas:

- Low-fat milk, pineapple, mango, spinach
- Almond milk, orange, banana, kale
- Oat milk, blueberries, raspberries, spinach
- Want more ideas? Download our tips for vitamin-packed smoothies!

05 Egg white scramble

Start with egg whites and then add veggies and low-fat cheese. Try these ideas:

- Egg whites, zucchini, kale, mozzarella
- Egg whites, onions, peppers, cheddar
- Egg whites, mushrooms, spinach, feta
- Want to try something new? Try baking in muffin cups!



Lunch 5 Ways

01

Garden Salad

Start with leafy greens, add veggies and protein, and then drizzle with dressing or vinaigrette. Try these ideas:

- Spinach, kale, avocado, tomato, cucumber, chicken, green goddess dressing
- Spinach, arugula, corn, peppers, tomato, black beans, southwest dressing
- Mixed greens, avocado, carrot, radish, salmon, sesame-tamari dressing

02

Grain Bowl

Start with whole grains, add veggies and protein, and then drizzle with sauce. Try these ideas:

- Farro, spinach, tomato, basil, mozzarella, chicken, balsamic
- Quinoa, carrot, beet, tomato, broccoli, red onion, tofu, pesto
- Brown rice, mushrooms, kale, cucumbers, tofu, miso-sesame

03

Sandwich or wrap

Start with bread or a wrap made with whole-grains or nut flour, add a spread and protein, and then top with veggies. Try these ideas:

- Whole-wheat bread, low-fat mayo, turkey, mixed greens, tomatoes, carrots
- Ancient-grain tortilla, avocado, black beans, onions, peppers, cheese
- Whole-grain pita, hummus, chicken, romaine, cucumbers, tomatoes

04

Soup

Start with a low-sodium broth and then add protein, veggies, and whole grains. Try these ideas:

- Veggie broth, black beans, corn, zucchini, tomatoes, brown rice
- Chicken broth, chicken, onions, carrots, celery, farro
- Veggie broth, white beans, tomatoes, squash, kale, quinoa

05

Bento box

Start with a main dish packed with protein and whole grains and then add fruit and veggies. Try these ideas:

- Chicken teriyaki with broccoli, brown rice, cucumber, radish, and blueberries
- Salmon salad, whole-grain crackers, celery, carrots, grapes
- Black beans with sweet potatoes, quinoa, kale, whole-grain tortillas or wraps



Snacks 5 Ways

01 Salty

Craving something salty? Try these ideas:

- Baked tortilla chips + fresh salsa
- Almonds + cashews + pumpkins seeds + unsweetened blueberries
- Edamame + sea salt + lemon zest

02 Sweet

Looking for something to curb your sweet tooth? Try these ideas:

- Banana + hemp seeds + honey
- Apple + almond butter
- Berries + dark chocolate

03 Savory

Want something savory? Try these ideas:

- Roasted chickpeas + avocado oil + sea salt
- Plain, non-fat herb yogurt dip + pretzels
- Whole-grain toast + avocado + pumpkin seeds

04 Crunchy

Craving something crispy or crunchy? Try these ideas:

- Popcorn + olive oil + herbs
- Carrots + pita chips + hummus
- Baked beet chips + mashed avocado

05 Satisfying

Want something that will fill you up? Try these ideas:

- Strawberries + banana + spinach + almond milk smoothie
- Hard-boiled egg + everything bagel spice mix
- Low-fat cheese + whole-grain crackers



Dinner 5 Ways

01 Tacos

Start with a whole-grain base, add protein and veggies and then wrap it up. Try these ideas:

- Brown rice, ground turkey, onions, peppers, romaine wrap
- Quinoa, black beans, sweet potatoes, corn, whole-grain tortilla
- Brown rice, white fish, cabbage, avocado, almond flour wrap

02 Pasta

Start with noodles, add protein and veggies and then stir fry sauce. Try these ideas:

- Whole-wheat spaghetti, lentils, broccoli, tomato sauce
- Chickpea pasta, chicken, zucchini, kale pesto
- Zucchini noodles, shrimp, tomato, spinach, extra virgin olive oil

03 Stir-fry

Start with whole-grain, add protein and veggies and then mix in sauce. Try these ideas:

- Brown rice, tofu, broccoli, cabbage, peanut sauce
- Farro, chicken, carrots, peas, sesame-tamari sauce
- Quinoa, tempeh, pepper, onions, garlic-chili sauce

04 Burgers

Start with the protein, add veggies and then wrap it up. Try these ideas:

- Black bean burger, tomato, onion, butter lettuce, whole-grain bun
- Salmon burger, avocado, radish, romaine wrap
- Turkey burger, spinach, avocado, tomato, almond flour wrap

05 Plant-powered

Start with plant protein, add veggies and whole-grains and then mix in sauce. Try these ideas:

- Chickpeas, sweet potatoes, kale, quinoa, curry
- Lentils, eggplant, tomatoes, brown rice, harissa
- White beans, sun-dried tomatoes, arugula, whole-grain noodles, pea pesto

Create a nourishing bowl

Build a balanced meal that's easy and enjoyable with these six elements

01 Foundation (greens)

Choose dark, leafy greens like kale, spinach, swiss chard, arugula, or mixed greens. Add more color with cabbage or radicchio. Leafy green veggies are packed with vitamins, minerals, and fiber (and low in calories).

02 Growth factor (protein)

Use healthy proteins to power up your bowl – like chickpeas, black beans, tofu, eggs, tuna, or chicken. Protein functions as the building blocks of muscles and bones. They also provide essential vitamins and minerals – and keep you feeling full longer.

03 Healthy fats

Add a serving of healthy fats to your bowl, like salmon, chia seeds, hemp seeds, avocado, almonds, walnuts, or olive oil. Healthy fats can help lower cholesterol, reduce inflammation and promote normal brain functions.

04 Fruit (or other complex carbohydrates)

Add a boost to your bowl with fruit or another complex carb, like blueberries, strawberries, carrots, corn, quinoa, or farro. Complex carbs are high in fiber, which can help lower cholesterol and keep you feeling full longer.

05 Fermentation (probiotics)

Support your gut health by adding fermented foods that contain probiotics, like pickled red onions, pickled beets, kimchi, parmesan cheese, apple cider vinegar dressing, or yogurt dressing. Probiotics promote a healthy balance of gut bacteria and support a healthy digestive system and immune functions.

06 Fun (prebiotics)

Top off your bowl with a fun prebiotic, like apples, grapefruit, garlic, onions, asparagus jicama or flaxseeds. Prebiotics contain a healthy dose of fiber that feeds the friendly bacteria in your gut, which aids in a healthy digestive system and boosts immune functions.



Plant Powered Burrito bowl

Quick, easy, and customizable burrito bowls packed with flavorful veggies



Ingredients

Beans:

- 2, 15-oz. cans black or pinto beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- ¼ tsp. sea salt

Cauliflower Rice:

- 2 tbsp. Extra virgin olive oil
- 3 tbsp. minced garlic (about 6 cloves)
- ½ c. red onion, diced
- 1 large head of cauliflower, grated into rice (or 1 bag of cauliflower rice)
- ¼ tsp. sea salt
- 1/3 c. lime juice
- 2 tsp. chili powder
- 2/3 c. salsa
- ½ cilantro

Peppers and Onions:

- 2 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 2 bell peppers, thinly sliced
- 1 red onion, thinly sliced

Toppings, optional:

- Avocado
- Cilantro
- Salsa

Instructions

1. Add beans to medium saucepan over medium heat and season with spices. Once bubbling, reduce heat to low and stir occasionally.
2. Heat large skillet over medium heat and add oil, garlic, and onion. Sauté for 1 minute. Add cauliflower rice and stir to coat.
3. Place the lid on skillet to steam the rice for about 2-4 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat and add lime juice, cumin, chili powder, salsa, and cilantro. Stir to combine. Transfer to medium bowl.
4. Heat the large skillet over medium-high heat and add oil, bell peppers, and onion. Sauté, stirring frequently, for about 4 minutes until softened.
5. To serve, divide rice, beans, and peppers and onions into serving bowls. Enjoy as-is or add desired toppings.
6. Keep leftovers covered in the refrigerator for 2-3 days.

A recipe from [Minimalist Baker](#)

Want to learn more about healthy eating?

Check out resources from these organizations:

Providence

Health Coaching

providencehealthplan.com/member-perks/health-coaching/resources-and-tools/

Basecamp

welcometobasecamp.org

Providence Blog

blog.providence.org/nutrition

Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine

pcrm.org/

American Heart Association

heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating

Food Hero, Oregon State University

foodhero.org/

The Nutrition Source, Harvard University

hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/

MyFitnessPal

blog.myfitnesspal.com/

Mealime

mealime.com/





When you're healthy, you can feel inspired to do great things for your community and the world at large. We believe healthcare is a human right — everyone has a right to quality healthcare. We're dedicated to the health and care of every member of our community, no matter where they live or who they work for.

Because everyone's well-being matters.

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[ProvidenceHealthPlan.com](https://www.providence.com/healthplan)