



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES
Healthy People • Healthy Relationships • Healthy Finances

Meal Prepping Starter's Guide

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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN ECOLOGY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

**This is
NOT a
balanced
meal.**



This is
okay
some
of the
time.



What is Meal Prep?

❖ Planning and prepping all of your meals for your week ahead.

❖ This includes:

- Menu planning
- Shopping
- Prepping
- Cooking
- Portioning
- Storing





You will need:

Time

OR

\$\$\$\$

AND

Creativity



Why Meal Prepping?

- ❖ Convenient
- ❖ Healthy
- ❖ Cost-effective



Where to Start:

- ❖ Plan a menu for your entire week, including all meals and snacks.

Table 1					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast	1/2 cup yogurt, black coffee	1/2 cup yogurt, black coffee	1/2 cup yogurt, black coffee	1/2 cup yogurt, black coffee	1/2 cup yogurt, black coffee
Snack 1	1/4 mixed nuts, 1 cup berries	1/4 mixed nuts, 1 cup berries	1/4 mixed nuts, 1 cup berries	1/4 mixed nuts, 1 cup berries	1/4 mixed nuts, 1 cup berries
Lunch	4 oz. chicken, 1/2 cup rice, 1 cup veg	4 oz. chicken, 1/2 cup rice, 1 cup veg	4 oz. chicken, 1/2 cup rice, 1 cup veg	4 oz. chicken, 1/2 cup rice, 1 cup veg	4 oz. chicken, 1/2 cup rice, 1 cup veg
Snack 2	2 Tbl Ranch dressing, 1 cup baby carrots	2 Tbl Ranch dressing, 1 cup baby carrots	2 Tbl Ranch dressing, 1 cup baby carrots	2 Tbl Ranch dressing, 1 cup baby carrots	2 Tbl Ranch dressing, 1 cup baby carrots
Dinner	4 oz. chicken, 1/2 cup rice, 1 cup veg	4 oz. chicken, 1/2 cup rice, 1 cup veg	4 oz. chicken, 1/2 cup rice, 1 cup veg	4 oz. chicken, 1/2 cup rice, 1 cup veg	4 oz. chicken, 1/2 cup rice, 1 cup veg
*Common Conversions:	8 oz. = 1 cup				
	16 oz. = 1 lb				



Grocery Store Ads Can Help Make Your Menu

- ❖ For instance, if I see that bell peppers and ground meat (beef or turkey) is on sale, I would likely make chili or stuffed peppers that week.



Meal Planning Tips and Budget-Saving Tricks

- ❖ When planning your meals, look at grocery store ads and in-season food items to incorporate into your menu.
- ❖ Incorporate ingredients that can pull double-duty, like oats (smoothies, overnight oats, oatmeal, muffins)
- ❖ Freeze meal portions from previous weeks to add into future weeks' rotations.
- ❖ Stock your pantry and freezer.



Tips on Navigating the Grocery Store

- ❖ Stick to the perimeter of the store.
- ❖ Look for items with in-season and sale tags.
- ❖ Get produce and protein first.



Prep Day

❖ Prep can consist of:

- chopping and portioning ingredients for later use
- cooking large dishes at once and storing individual portions for later
- stocking your pantry and freezer with easy, go-to ingredients and snacks.



Prep Day

❖ Now that you have your meal plan for the week and you have done your grocery shopping, it's time to prep!

❖ Efficient prepping can take some time and practice, so be willing to have some trial and error your first couple of tries.



Prep Day Tips and Tricks

- ❖ Start slow. If cooking all of your meals and prepping all of your snacks for the week in one day feels overwhelming, try starting with just prepping one meal for each day or prepping for just 3 days of the week.



Prep Day Tips and Tricks

- ❖ Start with the meals that have the longest cooking time first, like meals that need to be cooked in the oven or a slow cooker.
- ❖ While those longer meals are cooking, you can prep other ingredients and work on quicker stove cooking or microwaving.



Prep Day Tips and Tricks

- ❖ Have your storage containers cleaned and readily available so that you can quickly portion out your meals as you finish cooking them.



Storage Containers

❖ Glass vs. Plastic

- Glass is typically more durable and can be safer to reheat food in.
- Plastic is typically more cost-effective and can be good to store snacks and food that does not need to be reheated.
- Plastic can also be good to freeze food items in, as well as appropriate freezer zipper storage bags.



Storage Containers

- ❖ Segmented containers for convenient ingredient separation without needed multiple containers.





Prep Doesn't Always Mean Cooking



- ❖ Chop veggies and fruit for easy snacks or meal additions.
 - Tip: These can also be frozen for smoothies.
- ❖ Measure out portions of snack foods, like nuts.

Prep Doesn't Always Mean Cooking

- ❖ Put a casserole together in a baking dish for an easy weeknight dinner that just needs to be thrown into an oven on a busy evening.



If you don't want to prepare items
yourself . . .

Plan to spend the money on pre-
packaged, pre-portioned items



**Now that we've talked about
the mechanics of meal
prepping, what about the
content of your meals?**



Meal Prep Food Safety

- ❖ Cook and cool all foods properly
 - Cook foods to proper minimum internal temperatures, and cool foods quickly to avoid the temperature danger zone, in which bacteria can grow well.
- ❖ Reheat foods properly
 - Heat food through in the microwave and consume readily.



Meal Prep Food Safety

- ❖ Store foods properly
 - Use food grade containers and store cooked or prepped food at the proper fridge and freezer temperatures. Consume within 3-4 days.
- ❖ Pack food to go in insulated containers and consume within 2 hours



Nutritious and Balanced Meal Prep

- ❖ Include a variety of food groups in each meal and snack.
 - Include lots of colors on your plate.
 - Try to have at least 3 food groups present at each meal and 2 at each snack.



Nutritious and Balanced Meal Prep

- ❖ Appropriate portion sizes.
 - Be sure to look at serving sizes on packaging, and utilize resources on MyPlate.gov to help determine the right portions for you.
 - Different sized storage containers can help make this easy for you!





United States Department of Agriculture









MyPlate Plan

Find your Healthy Eating Style

Everything you eat and drink matters. Find your healthy eating style that reflects your preferences, culture, traditions, and budget—and maintain it for a lifetime! The right mix can help you be healthier now and into the future. The key is choosing a variety of foods and beverages from each food group—and *making sure that each choice is limited in saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars*. Start with small changes—“MyWins”—to make healthier choices you can enjoy.

Food Group Amounts for 1,800 Calories a Day

				
1 1/2 cups	2 1/2 cups	6 ounces	5 ounces	3 cups
<p>Focus on whole fruits</p> <p>Focus on whole fruits that are fresh, frozen, canned, or dried.</p>	<p>Vary your veggies</p> <p>Choose a variety of colorful fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables—make sure to include dark green, red, and orange choices.</p>	<p>Make half your grains whole grains</p> <p>Find whole-grain foods by reading the Nutrition Facts label and ingredients list.</p>	<p>Vary your protein routine</p> <p>Mix up your protein foods to include seafood, beans and peas, unsalted nuts and seeds, soy products, eggs, and lean meats and poultry.</p>	<p>Move to low-fat or fat-free milk or yogurt</p> <p>Choose fat-free milk, yogurt, and soy beverages (soy milk) to cut back on your saturated fat.</p>
<div data-bbox="585 1072 712 1193">  </div> <p>Drink and eat less sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars. Limit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sodium to 2,300 milligrams a day. • Saturated fat to 20 grams a day. • Added sugars to 45 grams a day. 				

Be active your way: Children 6 to 17 years old should move **60 minutes** every day. Adults should be physically active at least **2 1/2 hours** per week.



Portioning Your Meals and Snacks

Fruits	Vegetables	Grains	Dairy	Protein
<p>Focus on whole fruits and select 100% fruit juice when choosing juices.</p> <p>Buy fruits that are dried, frozen, canned, or fresh, so that you can always have a supply on hand.</p>	<p>Eat a variety of vegetables and add them to mixed dishes like casseroles, sandwiches, and wraps.</p> <p>Fresh, frozen, and canned count, too. Look for "reduced sodium" or "no-salt-added" on the label.</p>	<p>Choose whole-grain versions of common foods such as bread, pasta, and tortillas.</p> <p>Not sure if it's whole grain? Check the ingredients list for the words "whole" or "whole grain."</p>	<p>Choose low-fat (1%) or fat-free (skim) dairy. Get the same amount of calcium and other nutrients as whole milk, but with less saturated fat and calories.</p> <p>Lactose intolerant? Try lactose-free milk or a fortified soy beverage.</p>	<p>Eat a variety of protein foods such as beans, soy, seafood, lean meats, poultry, and unsalted nuts and seeds.</p> <p>Select seafood twice a week. Choose lean cuts of meat and ground beef that is at least 93% lean.</p>
<p>Daily Food Group Targets — Based on a 2,000 Calorie Plan</p> <p><i>Visit SuperTracker.usda.gov for a personalized plan.</i></p>				
<p>2 cups</p> <p>1 cup counts as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 large banana 1 cup mandarin oranges ½ cup raisins 1 cup 100% grapefruit juice 	<p>2½ cups</p> <p>1 cup counts as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 cups raw spinach 1 large bell pepper 1 cup baby carrots 1 cup green peas 1 cup mushrooms 	<p>6 ounces</p> <p>1 ounce counts as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 slice of bread ½ cup cooked oatmeal 1 small tortilla ½ cup cooked brown rice ½ cup cooked grits 	<p>3 cups</p> <p>1 cup counts as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 cup milk 1 cup yogurt 2 ounces processed cheese 	<p>5½ ounces</p> <p>1 ounce counts as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ounce tuna fish ¼ cup cooked beans 1 Tbsp peanut butter 1 egg

Food Group

Example: Breakfast

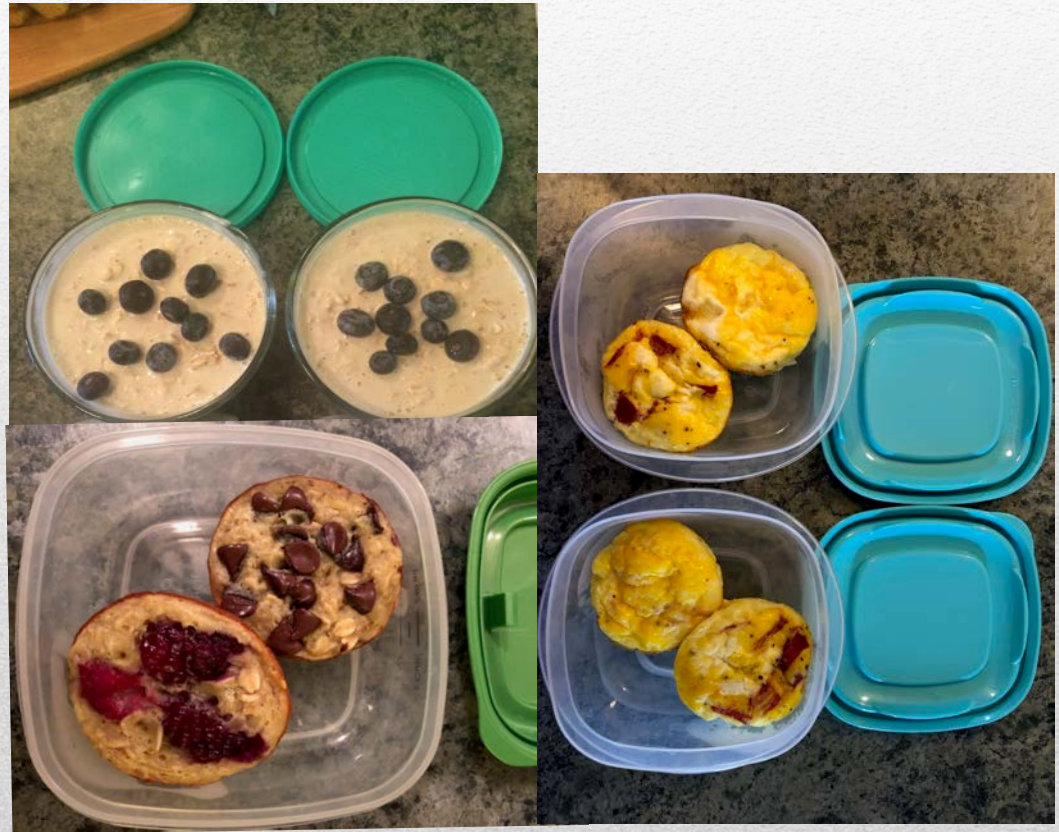
- ❖ Dairy, grains, fruit
- ❖ Protein, dairy, vegetables

Rule
of 3



Meal Ideas: Breakfast

- ❖ Overnight Oats or Oatmeal
- ❖ Healthy muffins (using banana or applesauce)
- ❖ Omelets in a mug
- ❖ Egg Muffins



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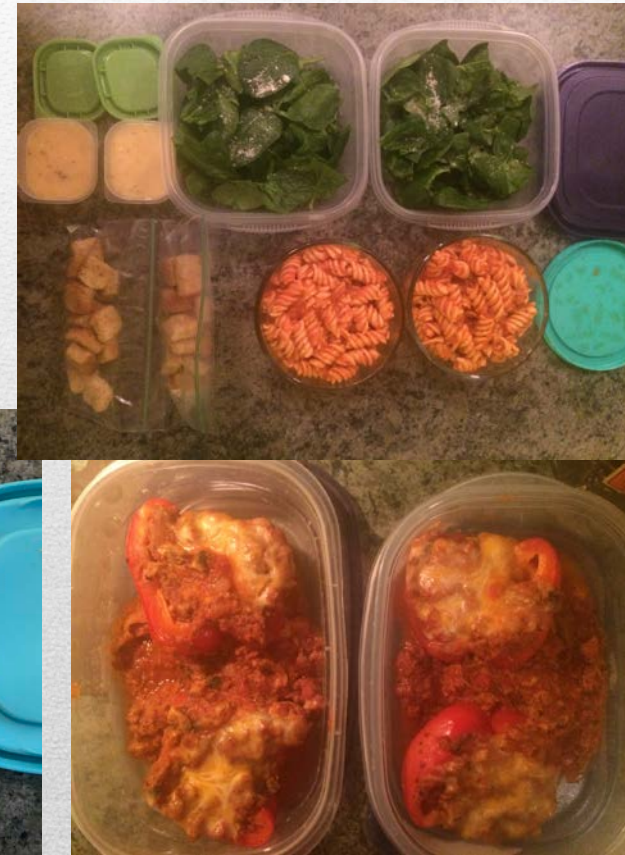
Meal Ideas: Snacks

- ❖ Fruit and nuts
- ❖ Smoothies
- ❖ Veggie sticks and dip
- ❖ Protein bites



Meal Ideas: Lunch & Dinner

- ❖ Turkey stuffed peppers
- ❖ Bunless burgers
- ❖ Creative salads
- ❖ Any combo of meat, carbs, and veggies



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Super simple

- ❖ Cheese sticks
- ❖ Apples/Bananas
- ❖ Granola bars
- ❖ Nuts
- ❖ Smoothies
- ❖ Dry cereal



Simple

- ❖ Yogurt
- ❖ Oatmeal
- ❖ Oranges & other fruit
- ❖ Mini pancakes
- ❖ French toast sticks
- ❖ Hard cooked eggs



Muffin Pan Ideas

- ❖ Muffins
- ❖ Pancakes and sausage
- ❖ Egg casseroles/quiche
- ❖ Hash browns or biscuits as crust
- ❖ Ham or bacon as crust

Just about any mixture of egg, meat, cheese and bread/starch!



Tortilla Ideas

- ❖ Burrito – quesadilla – roll-up
- ❖ Cinnamon, banana & nut butter
- ❖ Fruit and cheese
- ❖ Eggs and peppers
- ❖ Sausage and eggs



Hand Pies

- ❖ Fruit pies
- ❖ Filled pancakes
- ❖ “Hot” pockets ☺
- ❖ Scones



More Ideas

- ❖ Waffle sandwiches
- ❖ Loaded toast
- ❖ Bagels
- ❖ Yogurt parfaits



Mason Jar Meals

- ❖ Veggie salads
- ❖ Fruit salads
- ❖ Pasta salads
- ❖ Pasta & sauce
- ❖ Soup or chili



One-hand Meals

- ❖ Pepperoni rolls
- ❖ Pita pockets
- ❖ Tortilla rolls
- ❖ Empanadas



Side Dishes

- ❖ Fresh veggies or fruit
- ❖ Fruit snacks/leathers
- ❖ Trail mix
- ❖ Crunchy snacks



And more . . .

- ❖ Cheese and crackers
- ❖ “Planned” overs



Common Pitfalls

- ❖ What if I get towards the end of the week, and I'm tired of the food that I prepped?
- ❖ What if I go out to eat for a meal instead?
- ❖ What if I don't have time to grocery shop/prep on my usual shopping/prep day?



Common Pitfalls

- ❖ Where do I find recipes/tips to keep me excited to prep each week?
- ❖ What if I don't use all of the ingredients that I bought to prep?



Wrap Up:

- ❖ Meal prep is a great way to have convenient and nutritious meals at home.
- ❖ Plan your menu and shopping list.
- ❖ Shop smart, keeping grocery sales and coupons in mind.
- ❖ Prep efficiently all at once, which may take some practice. Don't give up!



Wrap Up:

- ❖ Store items properly, and travel with food safely.
- ❖ Remember to stock your pantry and freezer as you go to help save you time later.
- ❖ Use items that can pull double-duty.
- ❖ Get creative, and have fun with it!



Free Resources for Tips and Recipes

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<< A Life Well Lived Time to Think about Healthy Breakfast Ideas >>

From Freezer to Slow Cooker – Meal Prep in Minutes

September 10, 2018 by Shannon Carter

Recently, I had to be off my feet for a few weeks following a surgery. In order to ease the burden on my family, I put about 15 meals in the freezer that I prepared ahead of time ... in less than 2 hours. I looked up “freezer meals” and found a wealth of helpful ideas. Most of the freezer meals included assembling ingredients for recipes that will go from freezer to refrigerator

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June 5, 2017

Meal Prepping, How to Plan for your Week Ahead

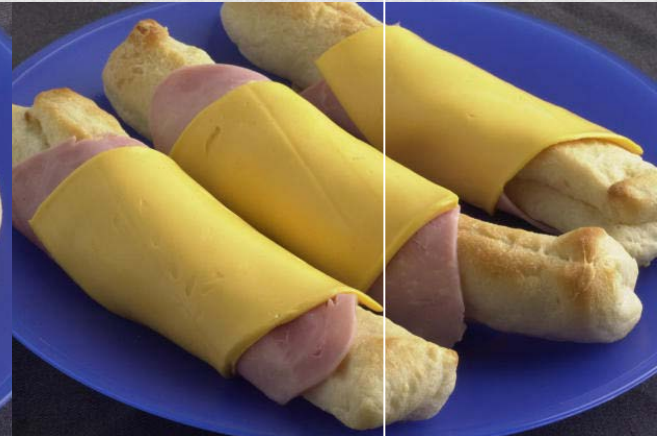
Meal prepping, planning and preparing one's meals for the week ahead of time, has become very trendy lately. My husband and I meal prep all of our meals every Sunday after we do our weekly grocery trip. Before we head to the grocery, we sit down together and develop our meal plans for the week, what meals to have

RECENT POSTS

-  Managing in a Crisis: How to Stretch Your Food Dollar During the Government Shutdown
-  Caffeine Contest: Coffee versus Tea
-  Have a Happy, Healthy Holiday!
- [Mind Your Meals this Holiday Season](#)



What do **YOU** do to help with meal prep?



What questions do you have?



Thank you!



Resources:

- ❖ Livesmartohio.osu.edu (Blog)
- ❖ Livehealthyosu.com (Blog)
- ❖ Youtube.com/user/southcenters/playlists (Telecasts)
- ❖ Celebrateyourplate.org (Online recipes and videos)
- ❖ Ohioline.osu.edu (Fact sheets)
- ❖ Choosemyplate.gov (Nutrition tools)
- ❖ Whatscooking.fns.usda.gov (Recipes)

