



Grocery Shopping Packet

HOW IT WORKS

Grocery shopping can be overwhelming, expensive and wasteful without a plan. This packet includes all the tools you need to have a successful trip to the grocery store. At the beginning of each month, sit down for an hour and plan out every meal you want for the month. This will save you both time and money. When you have a plan, all you have to do is follow it. Rather than trying to come up with something last minute or going out to eat because you couldn't find something to eat, you will be prepared. By planning ahead, you can also find ways to incorporate leftovers or reuse the ingredients that you buy, saving you money. With a little practice you will be excited and motivated rather than dreading those trips to the local market. Here are the steps you need to take:



1 Menu Planning

Plan to spend an hour once a month for menu planning.

You will need:

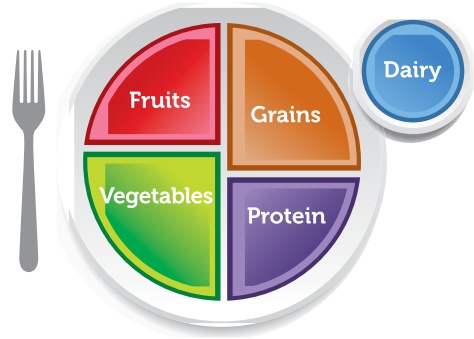
- The meal calendar
- MyPlate diagram
- Local grocery store ads
- Recipes (For well rounded, low cost meals check out:

www.cnpp.usda.gov/sites/default/files/usda_food_plans_cost_of_food/FoodPlansRecipeBook.pdf)

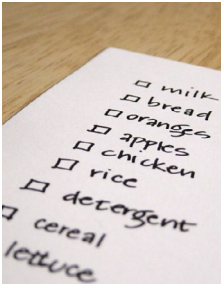
First look at the MyPlate diagram. Every day should include meals that are well rounded and balanced, so keep that in mind when planning each meal. Then look at the store ad. Are there certain food items on sale? By planning meals with ingredients that are on sale, you are going to save money. (For example: You wanted to make a strawberry smoothie but the strawberries are \$4/lb. The mangos, however, are on sale for \$1/lb. All you have to do is adjust the recipe and make a mango smoothie and you just saved a few dollars!)

Go through the whole month and plan each meal, but don't overwhelm yourself with a hundred recipes! Remember you can have the same meal several times throughout the month. (For example, for breakfast you could plan for oatmeal with cinnamon and apples and a glass of milk every other day, leaving only half the month to figure out other breakfast ideas. Or plan to make a full dish of lasagna on Sunday and use the leftovers as a meal for Tuesday.)

After you are done, hang this menu on the fridge so you have your plan available at all times.



Choose **MyPlate**.gov



2 Make the grocery list

This can be done at the same time as the menu planning. While you are choosing each meal, check your fridge and pantry to see if you already have the ingredients. If you don't, simply add them to your list. To keep a healthy plan, try to limit processed foods. If there are any desserts/processed foods you really want, see how hard it would be to just make them by hand. This can save you money, is healthier, and could possibly taste even better than store bought. Keep the list up on the fridge next to your menu so that you can add to it throughout the month when ingredients run out.



3 Start Shopping

Now you are ready for your trip to the store! Make sure you eat a meal before you go so you are not tempted to buy things you didn't plan on. Then grab your list and those store ads and head to the local market. The key thing to remember is to bring your list and stick to it; this will help you save time and money. Grocery shopping can be done as often as you prefer. Grocery shopping about two or three times a month will be most beneficial. Going more than once a month will help spread out federal assistance benefits such as SNAP so you do not run out as quickly and limiting your trips to two or three occasions will prevent you from spending more money than you planned.

You did it! That wasn't so bad was it? It may be a little tricky to get used to, but if you stick to your plan every month you will save time, money, and will be able to provide your family with healthy meals every day. Remember to adapt the meals to what your family really likes. If it's a tradition to eat out, schedule those family outings on the menu. This will allow you to still eat out occasionally, but will prevent last-minute trips to a restaurant because you cannot decide what to make.

MENU PLANNER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
B:	B:	B:	B:	B:	B:	B:
L:	L:	L:	L:	L:	L:	L:
D:	D:	D:	D:	D:	D:	D:
B:	B:	B:	B:	B:	B:	B:
L:	L:	L:	L:	L:	L:	L:
D:	D:	D:	D:	D:	D:	D:

GROCERY LIST OUTLINE

VEGETABLES	FRUITS	GRAINS
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
DAIRY	PROTEINS	OTHER
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____