



Planning Healthy Meals



Session Overview

In this session, participants will learn the benefits of meal planning including how it can help them save time and money. An educator will discuss the basics of planning meals using the MyPlate guidelines. Participants will practice planning healthy meals and determining how much food to purchase. The group will discuss ways to address common challenges to meal planning and possible solutions.

Target Audience: English and Spanish speaking adults

Group Size: 5-30 participants

Time Needed: 30-45 minutes

Behavioral Objectives:

After the session participants will be able to:

1. Plan two days of healthy, budget friendly meals and snacks.
2. Describe at least three ways to include more fruits and vegetables in meals and snacks.
3. State one way to overcome a challenge to planning healthy meals.

Key Message:

Meal planning saves time and money while providing good nutrition to families.

Materials Needed for Session:

- Primary handouts: USDA *Official USDA Food Plans: Cost of Food (Thrifty Meal Plan)* www.cnpp.usda.gov/USDAFood_Cost_Home.htm, USDA MyPlate *Create a Grocery Plan Weekly Calendar* worksheet, USDA *What's on Your Plate?* handout and *NEOP Everyday Healthy Meals* cookbook, *NEOP*-approved *Eat Better-Use the Web* ½ page handout; *NEOP The Shape of Yoga* or *Power Up in 10*
- Food models, 8-ounce measuring cup
- Optional: USDA *Sample 2-Week Menus*; WIC *Sample Meal Plan* poster¹; extra *NEOP Everyday Healthy Meals* cookbooks

Outline of 45-minute session: *(30 minute session in italics)*

- Welcome & introduction (1 min)
- Activity 1: Your Food Budget (4 min) *(3 min)*
- Activity 2: What's for Dinner? (3 min) *(2 min)*
- Activity 3: Let's Plan! (20 min) *(12 min)*
- Activity 4: Review, Improve and Prepare to Shop (8 min) *(5 min)*
- Activity 5: Addressing Challenges to Meal Planning (7 min) *(5 min)*
- Conclusion and Evaluation (2 min)

Welcome to "Planning Healthy Meals" (1 min)

1. Welcome and introduce the class topic *(If teaching this class as a series, review the past class and home activities.)*
Today we will start a two-part class to help you eat right when money is tight. In part one, we will discuss how to plan meals and in part two, we will discuss shopping tips. *(Distribute the handout packet.)*
2. Review the class objectives and the key message.

Activity 1: Your Food Budget (4 min)

1. Last week you were asked to save all of your receipts for food purchases for one week and determine how much you spent on food. Were you surprised at what you found? Who would like to share their cost of food for the week?
2. Look at the ***Cost of Food handout***. There are four levels – Thrifty Meal Plan, Low-cost Plan, Moderate-cost Plan and Liberal Plan.
3. **Thrifty Meal Plan**
This meal plan is used to determine the amount of the CalFresh/SNAP benefit. These costs are based on simple meals and do not include eating out. Look at the “Thrifty Plan” column and find the following:
 - Weekly cost of food for one female adult 19-50 years (*Answer = \$38.60**)
 - Weekly cost of food for one child 4-5 years (*Answer \$25.30**)
 - Monthly cost of food for your family (*Answer will vary based on family size*; see bottom of table, Family of 4 (couple with 2 children 6-11 yrs of age) = \$632.30*)
** Update information using most current meal plan available*
4. How does your weekly cost of food compare to the Thrifty Plan? CalFresh and other food assistance benefits are meant to supplement your cost of food. You know how much you receive in benefits each month and you know how much you spend on food in one week, so now you have an idea of how much to budget for food. Keeping your food budget in mind, let’s talk about meal planning.

Activity 2: What’s for Dinner? (3 min)

1. How many of you know what you’re having for dinner tonight? Tomorrow night? If you can plan at least a few days of meals and snacks for your family you are on your way to:
 - Eating healthier
 - Saving time and money
 - Reducing trips to the grocery store
2. What do you think about when you decide what to eat? (*Offer examples as needed*)
 - Does your family like certain foods?
 - Do you have leftovers? What’s already in your cupboard?
 - How much time do you have to prepare and cook the food?
 - Are there new recipes or foods you want to try?
 - What foods are on sale or in season?

Activity: Share with the person next to you one recipe your family asks you to prepare often.

Activity 3: Let’s Plan Meals and Snacks (20 min)

Meal planning goes beyond just deciding if you are going to have meat, chicken or fish for dinner. To get all the benefits you need to plan the whole plate for your meals and snacks. Today we are going to plan meals and snacks for two days using this ***Weekly Calendar worksheet***. We will also use the ***What’s on Your Plate handout*** as a guide and the ***Everyday cookbook*** for ideas.

Five Tips for Meal Planning:

As we are planning the meals, keep the following tips in mind to help meet the MyPlate guidelines:

1. **Include all 5 food groups:**
 - Make sure there are 3 – 5 food groups in each meal.
2. **Make half your plate fruits & vegetables:**
 - Make sure there are a fruit and/or vegetable in each meal.
 - Include 2 vegetables at the main meal.
 - Include 1 citrus fruit each day (*orange, grapefruit, tangerine, etc.*).

3. Make half your grains whole:
 - Write in at least three whole grain choices each day (*whole grain cereal, bread, pasta, rice and snack crackers*).
4. Got your dairy?:
 - Include 2-3 low-fat or fat-free dairy foods each day. Milk on your cereal counts.
 - A cup of yogurt or 1 ½ ounces of cheese (a piece the size of your thumb) each count as a serving.
5. Vary your protein food choices:
 - Include some lean meat, poultry or fish. Remove the skin from chicken to get fewer calories and less fat.
 - Write in fish for one of the meals – canned tuna or salmon counts.

Now let's plan meals and snacks for two days, Monday and Tuesday, using the *Weekly Calendar worksheet*. For Monday, we will write in recipes from the *Everyday cookbook*. For Tuesday, we will use our own ideas. (*Optional handout: Use the USDA Sample 2-Week Menus or the more simplified WIC Sample Meal Plan poster for ideas.*)

	Monday*	Tuesday
Breakfast	Find a breakfast recipe that includes a dairy food & a fruit. <i>(Breakfast Fruit Cup, Tropical Eye Opener)</i>	Include 3 – 5 food groups.
Lunch	Find a lunch recipe that includes a veg. & a protein food. <i>(Black Bean & Corn Pitas, Zesty Asian Chicken Salad, Tuna Apple Salad)</i>	Include 3 – 5 food groups.
Dinner	Find a dinner recipe that includes a protein food, a veg. & a grain food. <i>(Chicken & Dumplings, Vegetable Chicken Enchiladas, Simple Fish Tacos)</i> What vegetable side dish can we include? <i>(Zucchini Sauté, Avocado Tortilla Soup, Herbed Vegetable Combo, Savory Greens)</i>	Include 3 – 5 food groups.
Snacks	Find a snack recipe that includes a vegetable & a snack recipe that includes a grain food. <i>(Chickpea Dip with Vegetables, Veggie Tortilla Roll-up)</i>	Use snacks to fill in any gaps.

**All of the recipes include at least 3 of the 5 food groups.*

Activity 4: Review, Improve and Prepare to Shop (8 min)

1. Look at your meal plan and ask yourself the following questions:
 - Do you have the recommended amount for each food group each day? (Refer to the back side of the *What's on Your Plate? handout*.)
 - Is half the plate fruits and vegetables?
 - Do the meals have a good variety of colors and flavors?
 - Are the recipes easy to prepare?
 - Will the children like the meals?
 - Do you need to make any changes?

Activity: Tell the person next to you one thing you may want to change or improve.

2. How much food will you need to buy? You can save time and money by determining how much you need before you go to the store. Let's look at two examples:
 - a. 100% juice – How much juice should you buy if you wanted to serve a ½ cup of orange juice to a family of four? ½ cup each for 4 people is 2 cups (1 pint or 16 oz). *(Or use fruit, such as bananas or apples, as an example.)*
 - b. Meat can be an expensive part of our food budget so it is important to buy and serve the right amount – for health and our wallet!
 - As a guideline, 4 ounces of raw meat becomes 3-ounces of cooked meat due to the loss of water and fat when cooking.
 - Or, just remember that one pound of ground meat serves about 4 people. Remember, bones, fat, water and shells will add weight.

Activity 5: Addressing Challenges to Meal Planning (7 min)

Now we are going to look at some common challenges to getting that healthy meal on the table. We will divide into groups. I will present each group with a meal planning problem. Each group will talk about the problem and come up with ways to solve it. Be creative! In a few minutes, each group will be asked to share their problem and solutions. *(Or, conduct as a large group if time is limited.)*

Let's start with group one. Please read your problem and share your group's solutions. *(Offer the following possible solutions as needed.)*

Problem #1 – I don't have time to cook

Possible Solutions:

- Try 'no-cook' meals like sandwiches, salads with canned beans or tuna added
- Use convenience foods – take the help where you can afford it. Try canned and frozen vegetables, bagged salads, grated cheese, pasta sauce. Use complete frozen dinners and boxed casserole kits less often.
- Batch Cook – double recipes or use part of the recipe and freeze the rest for later.
- Remember, you will save time when you plan!
- Choose "quick and easy" recipes. Preparation and cook times are shown for recipes in your cookbook.

Problem #2 – Sometimes I make several items at one meal because my kids don't like or want the same things.

Possible Solutions:

- Let kids help with the planning. Perhaps they can take turns choosing items or recipes for the meal. If kids help plan and prepare meals they are more likely to eat them.
- Let kids help with meal preparation and serving. Choose jobs that are appropriate for their age.
- "Create your own" meals – salad, burrito, pizza, veggie plate – encourage kids to try new foods

Conclusion and Evaluation: (2 min)

You don't have to be perfect. Plan your meals and then change them if you want to take advantage of sale items or the opportunity to try new foods.

Last week we discussed the benefits of physical activity and tips to be active. This booklet provides more ways to be active. (*Distribute **The Shape of Yoga or Power Up in 10** booklets and highlight a couple of the activities.*) You can use water bottles or canned food as weights and a towel as a mat.

Home activities:

1. Continue using your worksheet and plan meals for one week.
2. Post your weekly meal plan on the refrigerator to remind you and family members to eat healthy meals and snacks.
3. Try two of the activities in *The Shape of Yoga or Power Up in 10* booklet.
4. Go to the MyPlate, Champions for Change or Eat Fresh website and find two tips on how to be more physically active. (*Refer to the **Eat Better-Use the Web** handout.*)

Evaluation:

- Do you have any questions?
- Let's review. (*Distribute evaluation forms or conduct verbally.*)

Planning Healthy Meals

After attending this class I feel confident that I can:

	Agree Very Much	Agree	I Am Not Sure	Disagree	Disagree Very Much
1) Plan two days of healthy, budget friendly meals and snacks.					
2) Describe at least three ways to include more fruits and vegetables in meals and snacks.					
3) State one way to overcome a challenge to planning healthy meals.					

Closing:

Thanks for attending the class and I hope you are now able to plan healthy meals.

If part of a series of classes:

At our next class, we will talk about shopping on a budget. Please bring your grocery store circular ads to our next meeting.

References:

¹ Sample Meal Plan <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/WICNEHEALEducationCampaigns.aspx>

For CalFresh information, call 1-877-847-3663. Funded by the USDA SNAP-Ed, an equal opportunity provider and employer. Visit www.CaChampionsForChange.net for healthy tips.



Official USDA Food Plans: Cost of Food at Home at Four Levels, U.S. Average, June 2014¹

Age-gender groups	Weekly cost ²				Monthly cost ²			
	Thrifty plan	Low-cost plan	Moderate-cost plan	Liberal plan	Thrifty plan	Low-cost plan	Moderate-cost plan	Liberal plan
Individuals³								
Child:								
1 year	22.00	29.30	33.20	40.70	95.20	127.00	143.80	176.20
2-3 years	23.90	30.70	37.00	45.00	103.70	133.20	160.20	195.10
4-5 years	25.30	31.70	39.30	48.00	109.40	137.40	170.30	207.90
6-8 years	32.00	44.60	53.70	63.60	138.80	193.30	232.60	275.50
9-11 years	36.20	48.30	62.20	72.40	157.00	209.10	269.40	313.90
Male (M):								
12-13 years	38.90	55.00	69.00	81.00	168.60	238.50	299.00	351.00
14-18 years	40.10	55.90	71.30	81.90	173.80	242.20	308.80	354.90
19-50 years	43.20	55.70	69.90	86.00	187.20	241.50	302.70	372.40
51-70 years	39.40	52.70	65.50	79.00	170.90	228.20	284.00	342.20
71+ years	39.80	52.30	64.50	79.80	172.20	226.50	279.60	345.70
Female (F):								
12-13 years	39.00	47.60	57.30	70.30	169.10	206.50	248.10	304.40
14-18 years	38.30	47.60	57.70	71.00	166.20	206.20	250.00	307.60
19-50 years	38.40	48.40	59.70	76.40	166.60	209.80	258.80	330.90
51-70 years	38.00	47.20	58.80	71.00	164.60	204.50	254.80	307.60
71+ years	36.90	46.80	58.10	70.10	159.90	202.80	251.60	303.50
Families								
Family (M&F) of 2:⁴								
19-50 years	89.80	114.60	142.60	178.50	389.10	496.40	617.70	773.60
51-70 years	85.20	109.80	136.80	165.00	369.10	475.90	592.70	714.80
Family of 4:								
Couple (M&F), 19-50 years and children—								
2-3 and 4-5 years	130.80	166.60	205.90	255.30	566.90	721.90	892.10	1106.30
6-8 and 9-11 years	149.90	197.00	245.40	298.30	649.50	853.70	1063.50	1292.70

¹The Food Plans represent a nutritious diet at four different cost levels. The nutritional bases of the Food Plans are the 1997-2005 Dietary Reference Intakes, 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and 2005 MyPyramid food intake recommendations. In addition to cost, differences among plans are in specific foods and quantities of foods. Another basis of the Food Plans is that all meals and snacks are prepared at home. For specific foods and quantities of foods in the Food Plans, see *Thrifty Food Plan, 2006* (2007) and *The Low-Cost, Moderate-Cost, and Liberal Food Plans, 2007* (2007). All four Food Plans are based on 2001-02 data and updated to current dollars by using the Consumer Price Index for specific food items.

²All costs are rounded to nearest 10 cents.

³The costs given are for individuals in 4-person families. For individuals in other size families, the following adjustments are suggested: 1-person—add 20 percent; 2-person—add 10 percent; 3-person—add 5 percent; 4-person—no adjustment; 5- or 6-person—subtract 5 percent; 7- (or more) person—subtract 10 percent. To calculate overall household food costs, (1) adjust food costs for each person in household and then (2) sum these adjusted food costs.

⁴Ten percent added for family size adjustment.



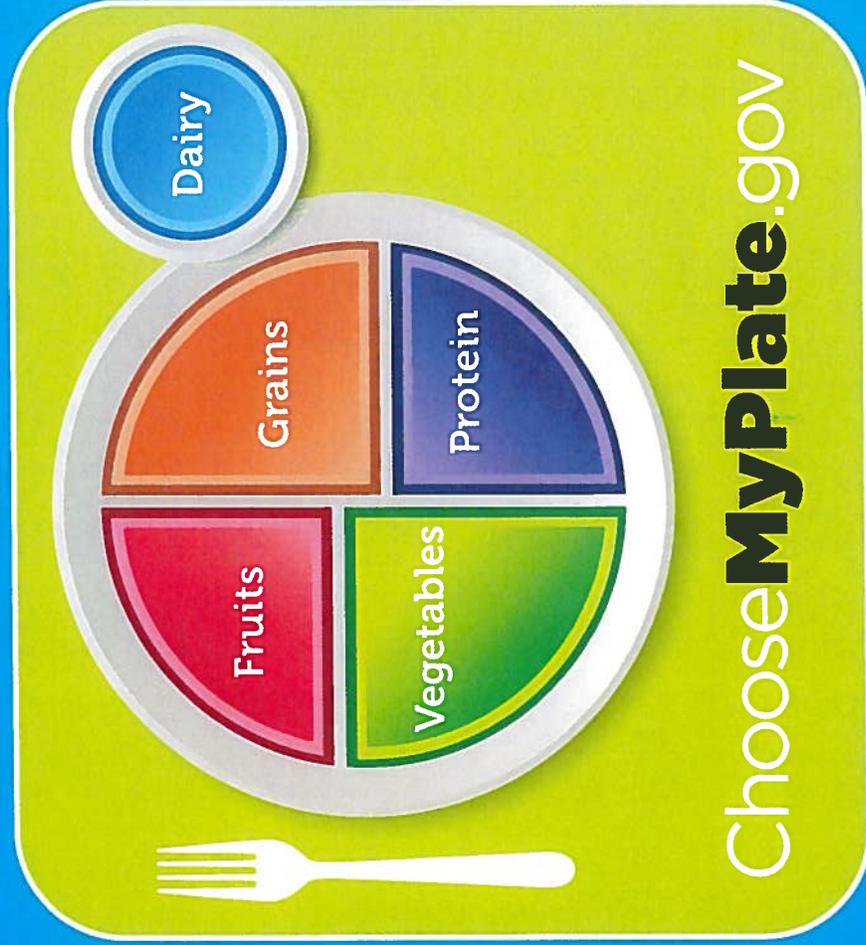
CREATE A GROCERY GAME PLAN

WEEKLY CALENDAR

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
BREAKFAST							
LUNCH							
DINNER							
SNACKS							

NOTES:

What's on your plate?



Before you eat, think about what and how much food goes on your plate or in your cup or bowl. Over the day, include foods from all food groups: vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, and lean protein foods.



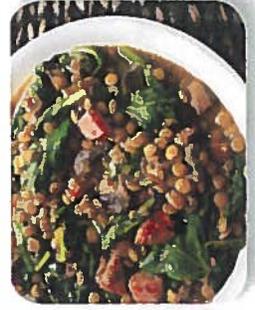
Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.



Make at least half your grains whole.



Switch to skim or 1% milk.



Vary your protein food choices.

Cut back on sodium and empty calories from solid fats and added sugars



Look out for salt (sodium) in foods you buy. Compare sodium in foods and choose those with a lower number.

Drink water instead of sugary drinks. Eat sugary desserts less often.

Make foods that are high in solid fats—such as cakes, cookies, ice cream, pizza, cheese, sausages, and hot dogs—occasional choices, not every day foods.

Limit empty calories to less than 260 per day, based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

Be physically active your way

Pick activities you like and do each for at least 10 minutes at a time. Every bit adds up, and health benefits increase as you spend more time being active.

Children and adolescents: get 60 minutes or more a day.

Adults: get 2 hours and 30 minutes or more a week of activity that requires moderate effort, such as brisk walking.

Vegetables	Fruits	Grains	Dairy	Protein Foods
<p>Eat more red, orange, and dark-green vegetables like tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and broccoli in main dishes.</p> <p>Add beans or peas to salads (kidney or chickpeas), soups (split peas or lentils), and side dishes (pinto or baked beans), or serve as a main dish.</p> <p>Fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables all count. Choose “reduced sodium” or “no-salt-added” canned veggies.</p>	<p>Use fruits as snacks, salads, and desserts. At breakfast, top your cereal with bananas or strawberries; add blueberries to pancakes.</p> <p>Buy fruits that are dried, frozen, and canned (in water or 100% juice), as well as fresh fruits.</p> <p>Select 100% fruit juice when choosing juices.</p>	<p>Substitute whole-grain choices for refined-grain breads, bagels, rolls, breakfast cereals, crackers, rice, and pasta.</p> <p>Check the ingredients list on product labels for the words “whole” or “whole grain” before the grain ingredient name.</p> <p>Choose products that name a whole grain first on the ingredients list.</p>	<p>Choose skim (fat-free) or 1% (low-fat) milk. They have the same amount of calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk, but less fat and calories.</p> <p>Top fruit salads and baked potatoes with low-fat yogurt.</p> <p>If you are lactose intolerant, try lactose-free milk or fortified soy milk (soy beverage).</p>	<p>Eat a variety of foods from the protein food group each week, such as seafood, beans and peas, and nuts as well as lean meats, poultry, and eggs.</p> <p>Twice a week, make seafood the protein on your plate.</p> <p>Choose lean meats and ground beef that are at least 90% lean.</p> <p>Trim or drain fat from meat and remove skin from poultry to cut fat and calories.</p>
<p>For a 2,000-calorie daily food plan, you need the amounts below from each food group. To find amounts personalized for you, go to ChooseMyPlate.gov.</p>				
<p>Eat 2½ cups every day</p> <p>What counts as a cup? 1 cup of raw or cooked vegetables or vegetable juice; 2 cups of leafy salad greens</p>	<p>Eat 2 cups every day</p> <p>What counts as a cup? 1 cup of raw or cooked fruit or 100% fruit juice; ½ cup dried fruit</p>	<p>Eat 6 ounces every day</p> <p>What counts as an ounce? 1 slice of bread; ½ cup of cooked rice, cereal, or pasta; 1 ounce of ready-to-eat cereal</p>	<p>Get 3 cups every day</p> <p>What counts as a cup? 1 cup of milk, yogurt, or fortified soy milk; 1½ ounces natural or 2 ounces processed cheese</p>	<p>Eat 5½ ounces every day</p> <p>What counts as an ounce? 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry, or fish; 1 egg; 1 Tbsp peanut butter; ½ ounce nuts or seeds; ¼ cup beans or peas</p>



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Eat Better - Use the Web

Find recipes and tips on healthy eating at:

Para recetas de comidas saludables y más consejos en:
Tìm công thức nấu ăn và thêm lời khuyên về ăn uống lành mạnh ở:

MyPlate



Choose MyPlate
Elija MiPlato
Chọn Đĩa Của Tôi
www.ChooseMyPlate.gov

Champions for Change



Champions for Change
Campeones Del Cambio
Nhà Vô Địch cho Thay Đổi
www.CaChampionsForChange.net
www.CampeonesDelCambio.net

Eat Fresh



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Champions for Change



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