



MINI LESSON

WEEKLY MEALS

Planning your next meal can feel overwhelming, let alone planning an entire week of breakfasts, lunches and dinners. But writing down your weekly meals ahead of time can help to save money, time, and prevent wasted foods.

Save Money

- Write a grocery list and stick to it. This helps prevent impulse purchases.
- Shop around when possible. Compare weekly ads from local stores.
- Stock up on sale items but only for an item you need. Sales often rotate so if you skip a sale once, you may find the same sale price later.
- Large or bulk sizes may offer the best price per unit (ounce, pound, etc), offering the biggest savings over time. Compare the cost of the single purchase of a bulk size vs. the cost of buying a smaller size each week.
- When shopping, compare prices for fresh, frozen and canned foods. Store brands may be cheaper than sale prices on national brands!
- Buy manager's specials for items that freeze well and freeze immediately until needed.

Save Time

- Shopping with a list prevents multiple grocery trips throughout the week.
- Decide on your meals over time, writing your grocery list during the week to prevent the rush of planning in a single day.
- Reduce time spent cooking by combining prep work. Having carrots two nights in a week? Cut them all at once!
- Try "batch cooking" to make multiple meals at once. Batch cooking is when you make enough of a dinner to serve for two nights, then save half for leftovers.

Prevent Wasted Foods

- Shopping with a list prevents you from buying food that you do not need.
- Plan to use leftovers. For example:

Meal 1	Meal 2	Meal 3
Baked chicken, rice, green beans.	Leftover chicken and rice to make a burrito with bell pepper and salsa.	Chop remaining chicken to make a chicken salad for a sandwich on whole wheat bread with carrot sticks.

Tips for menu planning

- First, look what you already have in your cabinets or freezer.
- Build meals around grains (like rice), cutting back on the amount of meats needed. For example: casseroles and stir-fries.
- Try meatless meals that use beans and lentils, which are often cheaper than meats.
- Plan for snacks in your menu. Keep ingredients for meals and snacks in mind.

Need recipe ideas? Check out these WIC-friendly resources:

- www.wicstrong.com/resources/recipes
- Ebtshopper.com/recipes
- <https://www.myplate.gov/myplate-kitchen/recipes>
- fns.usda.gov/tn/recipes-healthy-kids-cookbook-homes

PLANNER			
DAY	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER
SUNDAY			
snack			
MONDAY			
snack			
TUESDAY			
snack			
WEDNESDAY			
snack			
THURSDAY			
snack			
FRIDAY			
snack			
SATURDAY			
snack			



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