

AtlantiCare

REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

The Center for Surgical Weight Loss & Wellness

Bariatric Support Group

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The Importance of Eating a Healthy Breakfast



Reasons why eating breakfast can improve your day!

A healthy breakfast is essential for starting the day off right. The meal is often described as the most important meal of the day. However, many people rush through their morning routines and avoid preparing breakfast. Students, especially, may want to get a few extra minutes of sleep or prepare for their upcoming classes.

1. Improve your performance

Your body becomes dehydrated after sleeping all night. Reenergize yourself with a healthy breakfast. You could see the improved benefits on your performance at work or school. When you eat breakfast, it gives your body essential nutrients to perform. A [Food Research and Action Center study](#) shows that students who eat breakfast perform better on tests and when studying reading or math. You can also see the cognitive benefits of speed, concentration, and problem-solving skills. You could do better in your academic career if you eat breakfast in the morning.

2. Benefit your skin

The American Dietician Association says that eggs, lean proteins (like turkey), and fruits are essential to a nutritious breakfast. These ingredients are packed with vitamins A and D. They also contain the essential nutrient, lutein, which helps maintain healthy skin. Take a few minutes to fry an egg or throw some fruit in your cereal. If you feel too busy in the morning, prepare a bowl of fruit or a hard-boiled egg the night before. Grab it on the way out the door.

3. Weight gain prevention

Don't skip breakfast to avoid calories. Studies show that eating a healthy morning meal helps prevent further weight gain. Avoid overindulging in high-calorie foods throughout the day. Breakfast also provides you with essential nutrients that can be stored into energy so you can feel productive for the rest of the day.

4. Energy

Energy is essential for your brain and body to work properly. You may feel slow and sheepish when you awake in the morning with low blood sugar. The American Deictic Association says that a healthy breakfast should include lean proteins (eggs, turkey sausage, grilled chicken), fruits, whole grains, and some vegetables will provide you with the most energy and dietary benefits. Ingredients with vitamin C, like berries and oranges, helps your brain signals function so that you're more alert. Plus, your memory patterns will improve.

The Importance of Eating a Healthy Breakfast

5. Feel happier

Going for a breakfast that is high in carbohydrates like oatmeal can drastically improve your mood in the morning. When you sleep for eight hours or more, your body loses nutrients and we can become irritable when we wake up. When you supply your body with the energy it needs, you feel more satisfied and happy throughout the day. You're supplied with the essential nutrients that kick start your mind so you can start your day with a good attitude.

Eating a healthy breakfast of essential nutrients can help you improve your overall health, well-being, and even help you do better in school or work. It's worth it to get up a few minutes earlier and throw together a quick breakfast. You'll be provided with the energy to start your day off right.

Should You Eat Breakfast If You Want to Lose Weight? Here's What to Know

Written by Heather Cruickshank on February 11, 2019

There's a new study looking at eating breakfast and weight loss.

—Experts say eating a nutritional breakfast is probably a good idea. Getty Images

In the past, some studies suggested that eating breakfast might help promote weight loss, while skipping a morning meal might lead to weight gain.

But according to a new [review of research](#)^{Trusted Source} published January in the BMJ, there's no strong evidence to support the idea that eating breakfast aids weight loss.

The authors of the review looked at data from 13 randomized controlled trials conducted over the past three decades, mostly in the United States and United Kingdom.

They found that people who ate breakfast tended to consume more calories per day than people who skipped it. On average, breakfast eaters ate 260 more calories in a day, meaning it's unlikely they ate significantly lighter at other meals even though they consumed extra calories in the morning.

The authors also found that people who ate breakfast tended to weigh slightly more than people who skipped it. On average, breakfast eaters were 0.44 kilograms (15.5 ounces) heavier.

But does this mean breakfast is “unhealthy”? Not exactly.

“Although eating breakfast regularly could have other important effects, such as improved concentration and attentiveness levels in childhood, caution is needed when recommending breakfast for weight loss in adults,” the authors wrote.

The quality of evidence is low

According to the authors of the new review, more research is needed to examine the role breakfast might play in weight management.

The authors warned existing data on this topic is of limited quality.

For example, most of the clinical trials they assessed included small numbers of participants. Only two of the trials included more than 50 people.

The average length of the trials was also short. They were conducted over periods of 2 to 16 weeks, providing no evidence on the long-term effects of breakfast habits.

The results also varied from one trial to another. For example, eight trials found that breakfast eaters tended to consume more calories per day than breakfast skippers, but two trials found the opposite.

“As the authors suggest, the quality of the data is low and the results need to be interpreted with caution,” [Rahaf Al Bochi](#), a registered dietitian and spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, told Healthline.

“Research suggests that the benefits of breakfast are beyond weight,” she continued. “At the end of the day, nutritional requirements are very individual. It is important that you seek a registered dietitian for personalized nutrition recommendations.”

Some breakfasts are healthier than others

After reading the new review, some experts have raised concerns about the contents of the breakfasts that people were given in clinical trials.

“When you look at the intervention groups, what they were given for breakfast is not generally what we would recommend people eat,” [Liz Weinandy](#), a registered dietitian at Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center, told Healthline.

For example, participants in several trials were given processed cereals, such as Kellogg’s Rice Krispies or Frosted Flakes. In one study, they were given white bread with strawberry jam. These foods are high in refined carbohydrates and low in fiber and protein.

“I could see where this would add weight gain, because if you have a really high-carbohydrate breakfast, especially without fiber or protein, that makes people hungry again sooner,” Weinandy said.

“It makes your blood sugar go up fast, and your body secretes a lot of insulin to pull it back down, and then people get hungry again more quickly,” she explained.

[Sharon Zarabi](#), a registered dietitian and bariatric program director at Lenox Hill Hospital, agrees.

“It’s not the breakfast, it’s what we’re eating for breakfast,” Zarabi said.

Breakfasts rich in fiber, protein, and healthy fats can help people feel full for longer, compared to meals high in refined carbohydrates, she says.

That’s why it’s not enough to count calories, she adds.

Breakfast can help people meet their nutritional needs

Eating breakfast isn't a sure-fire way to lose weight, but it might have other benefits.

Weinandy says it gives people a chance to get some of the essential vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients they need for optimum health.

"Skipping breakfast is almost seen as a missed opportunity for getting some of those nutrients that most Americans are not getting enough of, like potassium, calcium, and fiber," she said.

If people eat nutrient-rich foods later in the day, then skipping breakfast might not be a problem. But in her experience, many breakfast skippers reach for unhealthy snacks instead.

That's one of the reasons why Weinandy encourages many clients to start their day with breakfast. However, she thinks it's important to take people's individual needs and preferences into account.

"In general, I do recommend breakfast," she said, "but there are pockets of people that it may or may not make a difference with. I don't think we have enough information, one way or another."

No one-size-fits-all approach

Ultimately, there's no one-size-fits-all approach to healthy eating or weight management.

"I think everyone responds to different diets differently. What works for one person may not always work for another," Zarabi said.

"I think it's important to speak with the person, probe to learn what has worked for them in the past, and try to make things sustainable," she added.

For people who eat breakfast, the healthiest approach is to choose foods rich in nutrients and low in refined sugars and unhealthy fats.

“I would recommend that you choose a balanced breakfast that nourishes your body. Aim to include a source of protein, healthy fats, whole grains, and a vegetable or fruit,” Al Bochi said.

“For example, this can be an avocado and egg in a whole-wheat tortilla wrap, Greek yogurt with berries and nuts, oats with fruit and nut butter, or a protein bar. Limit breakfast foods that are processed and high in refined sugars,” she continued.

Eating nutritious foods throughout the rest of the day is also important for supporting not only weight management, but good overall health.

The bottom line

A new study finds there’s still not enough clear evidence that breakfast will help with weight loss.

But experts say eating a meal in the morning can be beneficial to your health in other ways. They point out that sticking with a balanced breakfast is likely a good choice, even if it doesn’t lead to a slimmer waistline.

Whole Grains are the Whole Package

These Natural Grains Pack a Nutritional Punch

[Print](#)

By [Leanne Beattie and Becky Hand, Registered Dietitian](#)

Health experts agree that we need to eat more whole grains for optimal health. For years, [epidemiological studies](#) have found health [benefits](#) in people who eat whole grains, including a lower risk of Type 2 diabetes, a decrease in heart disease and certain cancers, and less unwanted weight gain.

Furthermore, a recently released "experimental study" resulted in two papers published in the American Journal of Clinical [Nutrition](#) and more evidence that whole grains might be superheroes. In the eight-week, randomized trial, 81 subjects were assigned to a strictly controlled weight maintenance diet that included either whole grains or refined grains. In a comparison of the whole-grain diet versus a refined-grain diet, [researchers found](#) that participants in the former [group](#) absorbed 92 fewer calories, had greater fecal output and experienced a [boost](#) to their metabolism resulting in calories burning even while at rest. Researchers estimate that the amount of extra calories burned would be equivalent to a 20 to 30 minute walk and a possible five pounds lose annually.

Based on the same study and subjects, [another group of researchers](#) also determined that the results showed a favorable effect of the whole-grain diet in creating a healthy gut environment and more positive immune responses. The two combined make quite a case for whole grains, indeed.

In fact, the [2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) recommends that refined grains be replaced with whole grains, aiming for at least three servings daily for females and four servings for males. As you can see, there's no need to fear whole grains—they aren't the enemy. However, consumers are often perplexed by their unusual names, the [cooking](#) and preparation required, and how to serve them.

What's in a Whole Grain?

Each grain starts its life as a [whole grain](#). A grain is considered "whole" when it contains all of its original parts—bran, germ and endosperm—in the same proportions as when the grain was in the field.

- The bran is the multi-layered outer covering of the kernel of grain that contains [antioxidants](#), B vitamins and fiber. You may be familiar with wheat bran or oat bran sold at your grocery store.
- The germ is the "baby" of the kernel, which grows into a new plant. It contains many B vitamins, some protein, minerals and [healthy fats](#).
- The endosperm is the inner part of the grain and is the food supply and energy for the young plant. As the largest portion of the seed, it contains starchy carbohydrates and proteins, as well as small amounts of vitamins and minerals. When grains are processed and refined for breads, cereals, pastas and flours, the bran and germ are removed, leaving behind the white endosperm. During this process, grains become less nutritious, losing 25 percent of their original protein content and 17 other essential nutrients. True whole grains, on the other hand, are packed with antioxidants, healthy fats and fiber, plus [vitamins and minerals](#) such as B vitamins, vitamin E, folate, vitamin K, magnesium, potassium, iron and selenium.

Take some of the guesswork out of the grocery store by familiarizing yourself with exactly what makes up a whole grain and what does not.

Yes, I'm a whole grain. I contain all three grain parts in the original proportions.	No, I'm not a whole grain. I do not contain all three grain parts in the original proportions.	I am maybe a whole grain. You'll have to investigate further to determine if I am a whole grain. See the clues below.
Whole grain (name of grain) Whole wheat Whole (name of grain) Stone ground whole (name of grain) Brown rice Oats and oatmeal Whole (name of grain) flour	Enriched (name of grain) flour Enriched flour Degerminated corn meal (name of grain) bran (name of grain) germ	Wheat Wheat flour Durum wheat Organic (name of grain) flour Stone ground (name of grain) Multigrain

If you're still unsure, dive into the [nutrition](#) label:

- If the first ingredient listed contains the word "whole" or a "whole grain" (for example, whole-wheat flour or whole-rye oats), it is likely, though not guaranteed, that the [food](#) is mainly composed of a whole grain.
- If there are two grain ingredients and only the second ingredient is listed as a "whole" grain, the [food](#) may contain as little as one percent or as much as 49 percent whole grain. You have no way of knowing.

The clue finding gets even more difficult if there are several grain ingredients in a food item like a multi-grain bread. For example, consider if the list of ingredients shows wheat flour, whole wheat, whole oat flour, whole cornmeal and whole rye flour. In this example, there are four whole grains used and only one refined grain—the wheat flour. Yet, you have no way of knowing the percentage of each. The refined flour could be making up 90 percent or more of the total grains, and the whole grains less than 10 percent. Due to this type of confusion, the Whole Grains Council created their ["stamp"](#) to help consumers quickly identify true [whole grains](#).

Today's Grains

The whole grains of today are actually as old as the hills. They have been a nourishing component for millions of people around the world. The grains below, **when consumed in a form that includes the bran, germ and endosperm**, are examples of generally accepted whole-grain foods and flours:

- Amaranth, which is actually a seed
- Arborio Rice
- Basmati Rice
- Brown Rice
- Buckwheat, which is actually a seed
- Bulgur
- Jasmine Rice
- Millet
- Whole Barley
- Quinoa
- Triticale
- Wheat Berries
- Wild Rice, which is actually a seed
- Popcorn
- Corn
- Farro
- Freekeh
- Oats

If you're still confused, you can further explore the expansive world of [grains](#) and how to read labels by visiting the [Whole Grains Council encyclopedia tool](#).

Adding Whole Grains to Your Diet

The easiest way to increase the amount of whole grains you consume is to substitute some processed grain products with their whole-grain equivalent. This is as [simple](#) as having a slice of whole-grain toast in the morning instead of using white bread, or using whole-wheat flour in pancakes.

While at the grocery store, be extra careful [reading](#) food labels, too. Words such as multigrain, stone-ground cracked wheat or seven grain don't necessarily mean the product is made with whole grains. And color doesn't automatically signal whole grain either—some brown breads are simply white bread with added caramel coloring.

With a few simple tweaks to your diet, you can add a whole lot of whole grains to any [healthy](#) eating plan.

- Wake up with a bowl of cooked oats—steel-cut, old-fashioned, quick cooking or instant. They are all whole grains.
- Build an [egg](#) sandwich using a toasted, whole-grain English muffin.
- Create a [lunchtime](#) sandwich using whole-wheat bread or a whole-wheat pita pocket.
- Use your favorite jarred spaghetti sauce on whole-wheat spaghetti.
- Serve grilled chicken and sautéed veggies over instant brown rice with a dash of soy sauce.
- Snack on light microwave popcorn.
- Stir up a sensational soup using frozen mixed vegetables and whole-grain barley or instant brown rice.
- Toss together the ingredients in your favorite pasta salad using whole-wheat pasta or farro.

Experiment with a [new recipe using whole grains](#).

Despite misinformation spewed by publicity seeking authors as well as bloggers searching for sensationalism, nothing really has changed. High-fiber, nutrient-rich, whole grains have been and are still one of the keys to good health. Now, we just have more evidence from well-controlled research studies to back it up.

Updated by Becky Hand, March 2017

Article created on: 3/9/2017

Healthy Snacking after Bariatric Surgery



Written by: Debbie Gullo MSN, RN, CBN August 2021

Snacking! We all succumb to the desire to chew, crunch, or our simple cravings. Snacking is not a necessarily a “bad” thing. What makes snacking unhealthy are the choices made when snacking and that it should be done in moderation. The balance that needs to be maintained between the two can be difficult to manage.

The daily stresses of life can also lead a person down a path to unhealthy snacking. How an individual handles stress can lead to the impulses and poor choices made at that moment of duress. Society has made it convenient to make bad choices when choosing snacks due to the readily availability to unhealthy quick options.

Healthy snacking may not sound exciting but it can be very satisfying when planned out. Yes, planning healthy snacks ahead of time is time consuming but it is a necessary evil if you want to be successful. Just like planning exercise into your daily routine is important so is planning for healthy snacking. Stop making excuses at the end of your day for the poor choices made. Own up to your decisions and choose to make changes!

Making Life style changes include planning meals and snacks that fall into your caloric intake allowance. Plan a daily meal schedule that includes snacks to keep you mentally fully. This will help to keep you on track for weight loss or maintenance. Mentally knowing that you have a snack or meal in the next couple of hours will help to keep you from making poor impulse choices.

Hydrate throughout Your Day:

Water...to boring, Add some fruit or vegetables for extra flavor

Decaffeinated unsweetened tea or coffee (sugar free additives are ok)

Sugar free, caffeine free, non-carbonated beverages (Crystal light, Mio drops, Propel, etc...)

Low-sodium tomato or mixed vegetable juice (watch calories)

Sugar Free Popsicles

Got the Munchies for Crunches:

Bell pepper slices (eat the rainbow)

Cucumber slices

Carrot / celery sticks

Broccoli florets

With vegetables try some hummus for dipping or Low fat / No fat dressing can be used for dipping but keep in moderation.

Roasted chickpeas / edamame / sunflower seeds

toast with seasoning, use low sodium options

Rice cakes / whole-grain crackers: Try adding

o Low fat Laughing Cow cheese, 40cal pre-packaged wedges.

Peanut (PB2) or almond butter

Unsalted Nuts and seeds (100 calorie packs, monitor fats)

Have a Sweet Tooth:

Fresh fruit / Canned fruit (in natural juice)

Angel food cake with fresh berries and zero calorie whip cream

Baked apple / peaches with cinnamon, if needed add sugar free sweetener

Frozen grapes / blueberries

Fruit shake with ice, almond milk, Greek yogurt, and sweetener if needed

Make sure to monitor portion sizes & calories. It is ok to snack when being mindful in your choices.

Bariatric surgery is not a cure but a tool! Your new journey towards a healthier life is not about forever being on a diet but making the lifestyle changes that will change your life for the positive.

HealthLine

Nutrition

Evidence Based

How to Meal Plan: 23 Helpful Tips

Meal planning and prepping are wonderful skills to have in your personal health and wellness tool kit.

A well-thought-out meal plan can help you improve your diet quality or reach a specific health goal while saving you time and money along the way.

Here are 23 simple tips for developing a successful meal planning habit.

1. Start small

If you have never created a meal plan or are getting back into it after a long hiatus, it may feel a bit daunting.

Developing a meal planning habit is no different than making any other positive change in your life. Starting small and slowly building confidence is a great way to make sure your new habit is sustainable.

Begin by planning out just a few meals or snacks for the week ahead. Eventually, you will figure out which planning strategies work best, and you can slowly build upon your plan by adding in more meals as you see fit.

2. Consider each food group

Whether you are preparing meals for a week, month, or just a few days, it is important to make sure each food group is represented in your plan.

The healthiest meal plan emphasizes whole foods, such as fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, high-quality protein, and healthy fats, while limiting sources of refined grains, added sugars, and excess salt.

3. Get organized

Good organization is a key component to any successful meal plan.

An organized kitchen, pantry, and refrigerator make everything from menu creation, grocery shopping, and meal prep a breeze, as you will know exactly what you have on hand and where your tools and ingredients are.

4. Invest in quality storage containers

Food storage containers are one of the most essential meal prep tools.

If you are currently working with a cupboard full of mismatched containers with missing lids, you may find the meal prep process very frustrating. It is well worth your time and money to invest in high-quality containers.

Before you make a purchase, consider each container's intended use. If you will be freezing, microwaving, or cleaning them with a dishwasher, make sure you choose containers that are safe for doing so.

It is also handy to have a variety of sizes for different types of foods.

5. Keep a well-stocked pantry

Maintaining a baseline stock of pantry staples is a great way to streamline your meal prep process and simplify menu creation.

Here are a few examples of healthy and versatile foods to keep in your pantry:

- **Whole grains:** brown rice, quinoa, oats, bulgur, whole-wheat pasta, polenta
- **Legumes:** canned or dried black beans, garbanzo beans, pinto beans, lentils
- **Canned goods:** low-sodium broth, tomatoes, tomato sauce, artichokes, olives, corn, fruit (no added sugar), tuna, salmon, chicken
- **Oils:** olive, avocado, coconut

Baking essentials: baking powder, baking soda, flour, cornstarch

Other: Almond butter, peanut butter, potatoes, mixed nuts, dried fruit

By keeping some of these basic essentials on hand, you only need to worry about picking up fresh items in your weekly grocery haul. This can help reduce stress and improve the efficiency of your meal planning efforts.

6. Keep a variety of spices on hand

Herbs and spices can make the difference between a meal that is amazing and one that is just alright. For most people, a meal plan that is consistently comprised of delicious dishes just might be enough to make the meal planning habit stick.

In addition to being exceptional flavor-enhancers, herbs and spices are loaded with plant compounds that provide a variety of health benefits, such as reduced cellular damage and inflammation. If you don't already have a solid stash of dried herbs and spices, just pick up 2–3 jars of your favorites each time you go grocery shopping and slowly build a collection.

7. Shop your pantry first

Before you sit down to make your meal plan, take an inventory of what you already have on hand.

Peruse all of your food storage areas, including your pantry, freezer, and refrigerator, and make a note of any specific foods you want or need to use up.

Doing this helps you move through the food you already have, reduces waste, and prevents you from unnecessarily buying the same things over and over again.

8. Consistently make time

The best way to integrate a meal planning routine into your lifestyle is to make it a priority. It can help to schedule a block of time that is dedicated to planning.

For some people, designing a meal plan can take as little as 10–15 minutes per week. If your plan also includes preparing some food items ahead of time or pre-portioning meals and snacks, you may need a few hours.

Regardless of your specific strategy, the key to success is making time and staying consistent.

9. Designate a place for saving and storing recipes

Save favorite recipes in a digital format on your computer, tablet, or cell phone, or a physical location in your house.

Keeping a space set aside for your recipes saves time and helps reduce any potential stress associated with meal planning.

10. Ask for help

It can be challenging to always feel inspired to meal plan and prep for an entire household; do not be afraid to ask members of your family for input.

Use online resources, such as social media or food blogs, for inspiration.

11. Track and record your favorite meals

It can be frustrating to forget a recipe that you or your family really enjoyed.

Avoid culinary predicaments by keeping an ongoing record of your favorite and least favorite meals.

Keep notes of any edits you made or would like to make to a particular recipe, so you can quickly begin taking your culinary skills from amateur to expert.

12. Always head to the grocery store armed with a list (or shop online)

Going to the grocery store without a shopping list is a good way to waste time and end up buying things you do not need.

Having a list helps you stay focused and fight the temptation to buy food you do not have a plan to use just because it is on sale.

Depending on where you live, some larger grocery chains offer the option of shopping online and either picking up your groceries at a designated time or having them delivered.

13. Avoid shopping while you are hungry

Do not go to the grocery store when you are hungry, as doing so can increase the risk of impulse buys that you are likely to regret later.

If you feel a little hunger before you are heading to the store, do not hesitate to have a snack first.

14. Buy in bulk

Take advantage of the bulk section of your local supermarket as a way to save money, buy only the amount you need, and reduce unnecessary packaging waste.

This part of the store is a great place to shop for pantry staples like rice, cereal, quinoa, nuts, seeds, and dried fruit and beans.

15. Plan for and repurpose leftovers

If you do not want to spend time cooking every day of the week, plan to make enough to have leftovers.

Making a few extra servings for dinner is a great way to have lunch for tomorrow without any extra effort.

16. Batch cook

Batch cooking is when you prepare large quantities of individual foods to repurpose throughout the week. This method is especially useful if you don't have much time to spend cooking during the week.

Try cooking a big batch of quinoa or roasting a large tray of vegetables, tofu, or chicken at the start of the week to use for salads, stir-fries, scrambles, or grain bowls.

17. Use your freezer

Cooking certain foods or meals in large batches and freezing them for later is a great way to save time, reduce waste, and stretch your food budget — all at the same time.

You can use this method for simple staples like broth, tomato sauce, or for entire meals.

18. Pre-portion your meals

Pre-portioning meals into individual containers is an excellent meal prep strategy, especially if you are trying to control serving sizes to promote weight loss.

19. Wash and prep fruits and vegetables right away

If your goal is to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables, try washing and preparing them as soon as you get home from the farmer's market or grocery store.

Having a refrigerator with freshly prepared fruit or vegetables that are ready for snacking will help with impulse eating.

Anticipating your hunger and setting yourself up with healthy and convenient choices makes it easier to avoid reaching for the unhealthy choices.

20. Prep smart, not hard

If you do not have time to batch cook and pre-portion your meals, there are likely some healthy, prepared options at your local grocery store.

Store pre-cut fruits and vegetables or prepared meals are usually more expensive, but if the convenience factor is what it takes to reduce stress in your life, it may be worth it to get to meet your long-term goals.

21. Use your slow or pressure cooker

Slow and pressure cookers can be lifesavers for meal prep, especially if you do not have time to stand over a stove.

These cooking tools can provide you with more freedom to finish other chores or running errands.

22. Vary your menu

It is easy to get into a dieting rut and eat the same foods day after day.

To avoid this, make it a point to try cooking new foods or meals at regular intervals.

Try different foods and expand your culinary menu to foods not typically on your plate.

You can also consider letting the seasons change your menu for you. Eating fruits and vegetables that are in season helps you vary your diet and save money at the same time.

23. Make it enjoyable

You are more likely to stick to your new meal planning habit if it is something you enjoy doing. Instead of thinking of it as something, you have to do, try to mentally reframe it as a form of self-care.

Meal prep with your favorite music, a podcast, or an audiobook while you do it. Before long, it may be something you look forward to.

The bottom line

Meal planning and preparation is a great way to make healthier food choices and save time and money.

Though it may seem overwhelming at first, there are a variety of strategies you can employ to develop a sustainable meal planning habit that works for your unique lifestyle.

Kitchen



Turkey veggie sloppy Joes



Ingredients

1 pound lean ground turkey breast meat (or 12 ounces soy-based crumbles)
1/2 medium onion, finely chopped (about 3/4 cup)
1 medium carrot, finely chopped
1/2 medium green bell pepper, chopped
1 1/2 cups zucchini, chopped
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 can low-sodium tomato paste (6 ounces) 1 1/2 cups water
1 tablespoon mild chili powder
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
5 ounces reduced-fat cheddar cheese, thinly sliced 10 whole-wheat hamburger buns

Instructions

In a large skillet over medium-high heat, sauté ground turkey until browned, about 7 minutes. Add onion and sauté 2 minutes. Add carrot and green pepper and sauté 2 minutes. Add zucchini and garlic and sauté 2 minutes more.

Add tomato paste and water, stirring until the paste has dissolved. Add chili powder, paprika, oregano and pepper. Reduce heat to medium and continue to cook until the mixture has thickened, about 10 minutes.

Preheat broiler. Divide cheese among the bottom halves of the hamburger buns. Transfer both halves of the buns to the broiler, open-faced, and toast until the cheese has melted and the buns are toasted. Remove buns from the broiler and fill each sandwich with the meat-vegetable mixture. Serve immediately.

Serves 10.

Serving size: 1 sandwich

Nutritional Information

Amount per serving

Calories: 230

Total fat: 5 g

Saturated fat: 2 g

Sodium: 340 mg

Total carbohydrate: 29 g

Dietary fiber: 5 g

Protein: 20 g

VANILLA CHAI



- ¼ cup unsweetened almond milk
- ¼ cup chai tea (brewed from a teabag and chilled)
- ½ scoop plant-based vanilla protein powder
- ½ frozen banana
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tbsp unsalted natural almond butter
- water to blend (optional)

Serves: 1

Nutrition: 219 calorie, 9 g fat, 20 g carbs, 4 g fiber, 17 g protein

Cauliflower Fried Rice With Chicken

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 8 minutes

1 (16 oz) bag riced cauliflower
2 egg whites
1 egg
Cooking Spray
1 tablespoon canola oil
1 teaspoon garlic, minced
1 cup cooked chicken breast, diced and skin removed
½ cup sliced scallions (green onion)
1 cup chopped celery
1 cup frozen peas and carrots, not thawed
3 tablespoons reduced-sodium soy sauce
2 teaspoons sesame oil

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Using a bag of already prepared riced cauliflower place in a large bowl. Set aside.
2. Combine the egg and egg whites in a small bowl. Beat with a fork. Set aside.
3. Coat a large nonstick wok or large nonstick pan with cooking spray. Add canola oil and heat over medium-high heat. Stir in cauliflower rice and garlic. Stir-fry for 3 minutes. Stir most of the time.
4. Add chicken and stir-fry for 1 minute. Add in scallions, frozen peas/carrots, (breaking them up) celery, and soy sauce. Cook for about 3 minutes until heated through, continuously tossing gently to coat and cook all ingredients. You can always opt to leave the chicken out if you decide that works better for you.
5. Push mixture to the sides of wok or pan. Coat the open side of pan with more cooking spray. Add eggs to that side of pan. Cook and stir about 1 minute or until the eggs are completely cooked. Mix eggs into cauliflower mixture. Add sesame oil, a little black pepper and stir fry ingredients all together.
6. Serve immediately or store leftovers in refrigerator for up to 2 days. This dish freezes great, too.

YIELD: 10-12 SERVINGS

CUBAN SHREDDED BEEF (SLOW COOKER)

Prep Time: 10 mins

Cook Time: 8 hours and 15 mins

Total Time: 8 hours and 25 mins

Calories: 164

Carbs: 6.6g

INGREDIENTS:

FOR SEARING THE MEAT:

- 6 whole cloves garlic
- 2-2 1/2 lbs. beef chuck roast or flank steak
- 1 tablespoon oil

FOR THE ROPA VIEJA:

- 2 (8 ounce) cans tomato sauce
- 1 green bell pepper, thinly sliced
- 1 medium onion, thinly sliced
- 1 (4 ounce) can chopped green chilies
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 teaspoons EACH dried oregano AND salt
- 1 tablespoon EACH ground cumin AND white vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1/4 cup chopped cilantro + more for serving

FOR SERVING:

Cauliflower rice and [cuban-style black beans](#)

DIRECTIONS:

SEARING THE MEAT:

Take the beef chuck roast and using a small paring knife, make 3 small 'x' marks into the meat. Take 3 cloves of garlic and insert them into the 3 'x' marks so that the clove is completely inserted into the thickness of roast. Season both sides of the meat with a pinch of salt and pepper. Heat the oil in a large, deep skillet. Add the beef in one piece and fry on each side for 5 minutes, turning only when the exterior is browned. This will splatter a bit but don't cover the pan as the meat will end up steaming rather than searing.

FOR THE ROPA VIEJA:

Chop the remaining 3 cloves of garlic into thin slices and add to the slow cooker along with all the remaining ropa vieja ingredients. I used a 6 quart slow cooker but a 3 quart slow cooker will work too. Cover and let cook on the low setting for 7-8 hours. When the beef falls apart easily when pulled with two forks, it's done. Shred the beef with the forks and give it a stir. Taste for seasonings, season with additional salt and pepper as desired.

TO SERVE:

Serve over a bed of rice with cuban-style black beans on the side topped with additional cilantro and a few lime wedges. You can also use the shredded beef for burritos, breakfast quesadillas, or tacos! The possibilities are endless!

- Leftover beef can be kept in an airtight container and refrigerated for up to 5 days or frozen for up to 2 months.

Hummus my way



Nutritional Info

Servings Per Recipe: 8
Calories: 65.1
Total Fat: 2.9 g
Cholesterol: 1.9 mg
Sodium: 9.4 mg
Total Carbs: 7.6 g
Dietary Fiber: 1.8 g
Protein: 2.7 g

Ingredients

1 can no salt added garbanzo beans - rinsed
1 clove garlic
2 tbs lemon juice
3 tbs light sour cream
1 tbs olive oil
salt & pepper to taste
small amount of cumin if desired

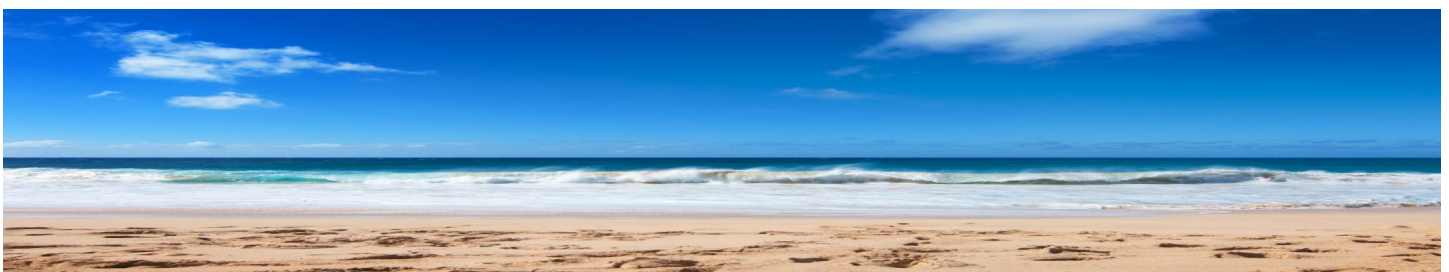
Directions

Rinse the garbanzo beans well.
Smash up the beans and garlic until smooth.
Mix in the sour cream, olive oil, and lemon juice.
Add salt & pepper to taste.

Helpful Hints:

- Our office is located in the new outpatient surgery center located in **Building 1200 on the 2nd floor in EHT.**
- Due to our move, we have a new phone number. To reach us, **please call (609) 833-9833.**
- Remember to keep **Hydrated!!!** 64 ounces of non-carbonated sugar free fluids, **water is Best!**
- Reminder to eat your **PROTEIN FIRST!** (65-80 grams a day)
- **Don't forget to follow-up...** schedule your appointments with the dietitian and your physician. The first year we would like to see you every 3 months and then on a yearly basis.
- Preparing for **SURGERY** ?
 1. Don't Miss your **Monthly** weight check! It may lead to delays in surgery if your insurance requires 4 or 6 consecutive month weight checks.
 2. Do not **GAIN** any weight prior to surgery. Your insurance company may deny your approval for surgery.

Have a Happy Summer!!!!





2021 Bariatric Support Group Schedule

Online TEAMS Meetings

Call Access Center for Registration and Web Access: 609-569-1000

Monday 5:30 – 6:15 PM

Date	Topic
July 19	* Eating Breakfast to Start the Day
August 9	* Healthy Snacking & Staying Activity
September 13	* Guest Speaker: Marcel
October 11	* Label Reading
November 1	* Stocking a Healthy Kitchen
December 6	* Self-Monitoring/ Self-Accountability

Monday 10:30– 11:30 AM

July 26	* Good Fats vs Bad Fats
August 23	* Meal Planning
September 27	* Importance of Sleep to Health
October 25	* Portion Control
November 15	* Goal Setting for the Holidays
December	* Happy Holiday! No SG