

# AtlantiCare

**REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER**

**The Center for Surgical Weight Loss & Wellness**

## Bariatric Support Group

**February 2021**



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## **5 Tips to Avoid Meal Planning Mistakes After Surgery**

### **Set a Schedule and Stick to It!**

It is important to eat when you are hungry. However, it is equally important to get in the nutrients you need during the day. Plan to have 3 – 5 small meals during the day with the protein in each meal. Skipping meals may cause you to get inadequate amounts of protein fiber and other nutrients. Skipping meals also increases grazing at night. A busy schedule is even more reason to plan.

### **Pack your Vitamins and Minerals along with your meals.**

Although the food you choose to eat may have nutrients that you need, they do not replace the vitamins needed following surgery. You need to take your vitamins and minerals daily to ensure you are getting all the nutrients you need following surgery. A helpful hint is to pack your vitamins in your lunch bag to remember to take them.

### **Include Foods You Can Tolerate.**

Depending how far after surgery you are, certain foods will be difficult to eat. If you are just starting out on regular textures, make sure to select soft and moist foods. Even if you are months or years out of surgery, you may need to avoid fibrous, stalk, and dry foods. Do not push it!

### **Do not Be Afraid to Try Different Foods.**

Do not pack the same meals every day. It may be tempting to stick with the same foods every day because they are easy. However, including a variety of different foods can provide nutrients that you may be lacking if you eat the same foods every day. For example, try to include flaky, moist fishes a couple times a week. The smell is often off-putting, but fish, in particular fatty fishes like salmon have with protein, omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin D.

### **Do not Prep Too Far In Advance.**

It is good to be prepared. However, making food too far in advance will make the food go bad before you can eat it. This can cause more food waste, increasing grocery bill, and you will have to find something to eat “off the fly”. Moreover, you may get sick from rotten foods. Food is typically good in the refrigerator for 3 – 4 days. You can write down or schedule out a week or two in advance, just do not make the food until you actually want to eat it.

# Why Plan Meals Out Ahead of Time?

## Saves Time

Many do not plan meals ahead of time because they feel it takes too much time. However, by taking an hour or two at the beginning of the week to plan out the week, you can have more time often spent scrambling to get a meal together.

## Saves Money \$\$\$

Planning meals help you reduce money spent at restaurants and fast foods establishments. Additionally, one can save money while shopping at the grocery store by having a prepared shopping list of foods needed and identified while planning. This helps reduce “Add On” items and trigger purchases.

## Easier to work in fresh foods rather than processed foods

Planning ahead allows you more time to work in more nourishing foods such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. When feeling rushed, convenient foods are often used, which can contain excessive amounts of fat, sugar, and sodium.

## It can help reduce Food Waste

Planning ahead allows one to get creative and resourceful. One can utilize leftovers and pantry items that may easily go bad before being used. It is also easier to stick to portions and measurements which helps reduce waste.



## Tips

- Make a weekly calendar and shopping list—Free PDFs are available online
- Use reusable bags and containers to grab and go
- Don't make too much in advance—food may spoil before being eaten
- Try different recipes and plan snacks as well
- Using Food diaries and tracking Apps helps with planning

# 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.



## Reading a Nutrition Label

**Servings per container:** may be multiple servings so consider how many servings is being consumed and multiple the following information

### **Nutrition Facts**

Serving Size 8.5 fl oz (250 mL)

Servings Per Container 1

**Amount Per Serving**

**Calories 160**    **Calories from Fat 45**

	% Daily Value*
<b>Total Fat 5g</b>	<b>8%</b>
Saturated Fat 1.5g	7%
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol 5mg</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Sodium 210mg</b> ←	<b>9%</b>
<b>Potassium 360mg</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate 9g</b>	<b>3%</b>
Dietary Fiber 1g	6%
Sugars 3g	
<b>Protein 20g</b>	<b>40%</b>

**Total Fat:** 1 serving = 5 grams

**Saturated Fat** = no more than 20 grams a day

**Trans Fats** = as little as possible

**Cholesterol** = less than 300 mg a day

**Total carbohydrates:** 1 serving = 15 grams

**Fiber** = 5 grams or more per serving

**Sugar** = no more than 10 grams per serving

“*Added Sugar*” = as close to 0 as possible

**Sodium:**

**Daily Intake** = No more than 2,000 mg a day

**High in Sodium** = 480 mg or more per serving

**Per Serving** = Aim for 140 mg or less

# ***Why is reading food labels important?***

- ◆ **Helps when following serving sizes**

- ~ One serving **DOES NOT** mean one container!!!

- ~ Measuring out a serving size makes following a meal plan easier and can help with weight loss.

- ◆ **Can help prevent consumption of high calorie, low nutrient foods that can cause weight gain**

- ~ For example, if you were told to limit sodium by your doctor, not using table salt is only one way to reduce sodium intake. Reading the food label can reveal hidden salt commonly found in processed foods, bread, snacks, and canned goods.

- ◆ **Helps with Mindful Eating**

- ~ Sure, one serving of crackers is 150 calories, but is 6 crackers going to fill you up? Would you eat the whole box to feel full? Is there something healthier you could have?



## **What do you do if a food does not have a la-**

This is common among fresh produce (like fruits and vegetables) and fresh meats. When labels are not available:

- ◆ **Look it up online or through a phone app.** Many apps already have the information listed. Here are some to help you out:

~ Calorie King: <http://www.calorieking.com>

~ My Net Diary: <http://www.MyNetDiary.com>

~ Calorie Tracker by Livestrong.com

- ◆ **Estimate:** Estimation can be helpful, however, it is not 100% accurate and we often underestimate serving sizes. Use the following approximations to help you out.

~ **Protein**: 1 serving = 3 oz. (a deck of cards) = 7 g protein <sup>1</sup>

~ **Vegetables**: 1 serving = 1/2 cup cooked (1 cupped hand), 1 cup raw (2 cupped hands together) = 25 calories, 5 g carbohydrates, 0 g fat, and 2 g protein <sup>1</sup>

~ **Fruit**: 1 serving = 4 oz. or 1/2 cup (baseball or 1 cupped hand) = 60 calories and 15 g of carbohydrates <sup>1</sup>

~ **Fats** : 1 oz. (or 2 Tbsp.)= 2 Thumbs together (nail to knuckle)

~ **Starches**: 1 serving = 1/2 cup cooked (1 cupped hand) = 80 calories, 1 g fat, 15 g carbohydrates, and 3 g protein <sup>1</sup>



## **Cherry Vanilla Protein Shake** (serves 1)

Ready in 5 minutes

### ***Ingredients***

- 1 cup of milk of choice (e.g. unsweetened almond milk)
- 1 serving of vanilla protein powder
- 1 tsp. Imitation Cherry Extract
- ¼ cup plain nonfat Greek yogurt

### ***Directions***

1. Combine all ingredients into a blender. Blend until smooth and powder dissolves.
2. Serve and Enjoy!!

***Nutrition*** (may vary depending on choice of milk and protein powder): Per serving using unsweetened almond milk = 185 calories, 4 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 35 mg cholesterol, 263 mg sodium, 6 g carbohydrates, 1 g fiber, 4 g sugar, 31 g protein.



## *Sweetheart Strawberry Dessert*

Ready in: 15 minutes

### *Ingredients*

- 20 strawberries
- 3 oz. low fat cream cheese, softened
- 2 Tbsp. chopped walnuts
- 2 Tbsp. Cool Whip Topping



### *Directions*

1. Dice 2 strawberries and set aside. Cut the stems of each of the remaining strawberries, forming a base for the strawberries to stand on. Starting at the point ends and cutting most of the way, but not completely through the stem end, slice each strawberry into 4 wedges.
2. Beat the cream cheese until fluffy. Stir in diced strawberries, chopped walnuts, and Cool Whip topping. Scoop or pipe a teaspoon of the mix into each strawberry.

**Nutrition** (may vary): Per strawberry = 35 calories, 2 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 7 mg cholesterol, 40 mg sodium, 2 g carbohydrate, 0 g fiber, 1 g sugar, 1 g protein.

Source: Valentine Night Strawberries Recipe. All Recipes Website.

<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/187409/valentine-night-strawberries/?internalSource=staff%20pick&referringId=199&referringContentType=Recipe%20Hub>.

Accessed January 23, 2020. \*\*Recipe has been altered from the original recipe.\*\*



## Slow Cooker Gumbo (serves 5)

Cooks in 6 hours

### Ingredients

- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 2 green bell peppers, chopped
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- ½ lb. lean chicken sausage
- 2 (14.5 oz.) cans of no salt added diced tomatoes
- 11 fl. oz. reduced sodium chicken broth
- 1 Tbsp. salt free Cajun seasoning
- ¼ tsp. ground black pepper
- ½ lb. uncooked medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 5 cups frozen riced cauliflower
- 2 sprigs of chopped fresh parsley



### Directions

1. Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add flour, cook, stirring constantly, until flour is deep golden and smells toasty (7 – 10 minutes). Reduce heat if browning too quickly. Transfer to a 6-quart slow cooker.
2. Add oil, bell peppers, onion, and garlic, to the skillet; cook and stir until tender (5 – 7 minutes). Stir into slow cooker until coated. Stir in chicken sausage, tomatoes, broth, Cajun seasoning, and black pepper.
3. Cook on LOW for 6 – 7 hours or on HIGH for 3 – 3 ½ hours. Stir in shrimp and cook until shrimp is opaque (about 30 minutes on LOW or 15 minutes on HIGH).
4. Meanwhile, place riced cauliflower in a microwave safe dish and cover. Cook in microwave for about 4 minutes
5. Serve gumbo over cauliflower rice. Sprinkle fresh parsley and fresh ground pepper on top as desired.

**Nutrition** (may vary): Per serving = 260 calories, 6 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 46 mg cholesterol, 960 mg sodium, 30 g carbohydrates, 8 g fiber, 10 g sugar, 20 g protein.

Source: [luv2golfandcook](https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/278208/healthier-slow-cooker-gumbo/). Healthier Slow Cooker Gumbo Recipe. All Recipes Website.

Retrieved July 28, 2020, from <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/278208/healthier-slow-cooker-gumbo/?internalSource=hub%20recipe&referringContentType=Search>.

# Eggplant Parmesan (serves approx. 6 – depending on size of eggplant)

Prep time: 10 minutes/ Cook time: 20 minutes

## *Ingredients*

- 1 large eggplant, washed and ends trimmed
- ½ cup reduced fat grated Parmesan cheese
- ½ tsp. dried basil
- ½ tsp. dried oregano
- ¼ tsp. garlic powder
- Dash of crushed red pepper (optional)
- 4 egg whites



## *Directions*

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Cut the eggplant into approx. ¼ cm slices (approx. 24 slices).
3. Combine parmesan cheese, basil, oregano, and garlic powder (and crushed red pepper if using) until well combined.
4. Dip a slice of eggplant in egg wash then dip in parmesan- herb mixture until well coated. Place each slice on the baking sheet.
5. Bake in the preheat oven for 10 minutes and then flip the eggplant slices to allow other side to cook for another 10 minutes. Bake until eggplant is tender and coating is golden brown.
6. Serve warm - hot.

**Nutrition** (may vary depending on the size of eggplant): Per serving = 130 calories, 3 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 34 mg cholesterol, 404 mg sodium, 14 g carbohydrate, 4 g fiber, 8 g sugar, 10 g protein.

## *Oven Roasted Beets, Carrots, and Onions* (serves 6)

Ready in 45 minutes

### *Ingredients*

- 3 large beets, peeled and cut into chunks
- 3 large carrots, peeled and cut into chunks
- 2 red onions, cut into wedges
- 3 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- Ground black pepper to taste



### *Directions*

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
2. Combine beets, carrots, and onions in a casserole dish. Pour vinegar over the vegetables and season with pepper. Cover the dish with aluminum foil.
3. Bake in the preheated oven until vegetables are tender (about 40 minutes).  
Serve warm.
4. Garnish with fresh parsley if desired.

**Nutrition** (may vary): Per serving = 50 calories, 0 grams fat, 0 grams saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 11 grams carbohydrate, 3 grams fiber, 6 grams sugar, 1 gram protein.

Source: Purple Beet, Carrot, and Onion Medley. All Recipes Website.

<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/235532/purple-beet-carrot-and-onion-medley/?internalSource=hub%20recipe&referringContentType=Search>. Accessed July 26, 2019.



# Girl Scout Cookie Inspired Healthy Protein Shakes



## thin mint

10-12 ounces of Almond Milk, Milk, Soy Milk, or water

1 scoop Chocolate protein nutritional shake mix

1 teaspoon mint extract

4-5 ice cubes

Mix ingredients in blender until smooth, garnish with a fresh mint leaf (optional)

## samoas

10-12 ounces of Almond Milk, Milk, Soy Milk, or water

1 scoop Chocolate protein nutritional shake mix

1 teaspoon Torani sugar-free caramel syrup

1 tsp unsweetened shredded coconut, plus a dash more for garnish

4-5 ice cubes

Mix ingredients in blender until smooth, garnish with a unsweetened shredded coconut (optional)

## peanut butter patties

10-12 ounces of Almond Milk, Milk, Soy Milk, or water

1 scoop Chocolate protein nutritional shake mix

1 tablespoon PB2 powdered peanut butter

4-5 ice cubes

Mix ingredients in blender until smooth

# lemonades

10-12 ounces of Almond Milk, Milk, Soy Milk, or water  
1 scoop Vanilla protein nutritional shake mix  
1 tablespoon Jell-O sugar-free lemon pudding dessert powder  
4-5 ice cubes  
Mix ingredients in blender until smooth, garnish with fresh lemon zest (optional)

# dulce de leche

10-12 ounces of Almond Milk, Milk, Soy Milk, or water  
1 scoop Vanilla protein nutritional shake mix  
1 teaspoon Torani sugar-free caramel syrup  
4-5 ice cubes  
Mix ingredients in blender until smooth

# *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.



## **2021 Bariatric Support Group Schedule**

Building 200/AtlantiCare Life Center

(At the corner of Delilah Rd and English Creek Ave.)

### **Monday 5:30 – 6:15 PM**

<b>Date</b>		<b>Topic</b>
January 4	—————→	Back on Track– Getting Motivated
February 1	—————→	Meal Planning
March 1	—————→	Healthy Dinning Out Options
April 5	—————→	Guest Speaker: Marcel
May 3	—————→	Plateau and Weight Regain
June 7	—————→	The Power of Sleep

### **Monday 10:30– 11:30 AM**

January 18	—————→	The Importance of Protein
February 15	—————→	Understanding Nutrition Labels
March 15	—————→	Looking Beyond the Scale
April 19	—————→	Emotional Eating
May 17	—————→	Falling of the Wagon
June 21	—————→	Vitamin D