MAKE A PLAN

Food dollars are some of the most important dollars you spend. They can be spent wisely buying nourishing meals for the family or they can buy spur-of-the-moment purchases lacking in nutrients.

Nutritious meals don’t just happen; they are planned. Planning your family meals cannot only save you money, but time and effort as well. A planned weekly menu can help you make a grocery shopping list avoiding unnecessary items or forgetting important ones. A grocery list can also help avoid unnecessary trips to the grocery store.

Be flexible enough with your plan to include any sale items that may be substituted in current menu recipes. Choose recipes that will be enjoyable and nutritious for the whole family.

When planning a weekly menu rely on My Pyramid. My Pyramid can help you plan ahead to incorporate enough daily portions of the five food groups to help meet your family’s nutrient needs.
GET MOVING . . . BE MORE ACTIVE AT HOME

We all need relaxation time. Time spent in front of the TV can be relaxing, but sometimes time spent in front of the TV can be spent more wisely if we are active. Your heart will thank you later!

♥ Walk your dog instead of letting him out in the yard.
♥ Make several trips upstairs throughout the day rather than piling things on the steps for a later trip.
♥ Take activity breaks during TV commercials.
♥ Do your own house cleaning, lawn maintenance and gardening.
♥ Walk briskly around your neighborhood (about 3-4 miles per hour).

MEAL PLANNING TIPS

✓ Include a variety of foods each day.
✓ Use different flavors, textures, colors, and shapes.
✓ Include foods from at least three of the five food groups at each meal.
✓ Make a collection of nutritious recipes that your family enjoys.
✓ Save menus to use again later.
✓ Plan for nutritious snacks from the five food groups.
✓ Limit foods high in fat, sugar and salt.
✓ Keep a notepad near the refrigerator to write down items that are needed.
✓ Turn leftovers into planned-overs! Example: serve a pot-roast on Monday and use the leftover roast in beef stroganoff on Wednesday!

DID YOU KNOW . . . ?

✓ Store brand products are usually cheaper than brand names.
✓ People spend 15% more at food stores when they are hungry. Eat before you shop!
✓ Bigger is not always better. Use unit price labels displayed on the store shelves to easily compare the cost on different size packages.
✓ The U.S. Average Cost of Food at Home in 2003 for a family of 4 on a low-cost plan was $601.50 a month. This does not include non-food items.
✓ Planning meals can save you money by making less trips to the grocery store.
Children are more likely to eat foods they choose and help prepare. Pick one evening meal per week your child can help plan (for example, let Thursday’s be their meal planning day). Be sure to give them the MyPyramid Challenge... the meal needs to include foods from all the food groups! Encourage your child to plan ahead so necessary foods can be purchased, and some meal preparation done ahead. You’ll teach them valuable skills in meal planning, preparation and nutrition!

**Easy Beef Stroganoff**
*(Made with leftover roast)*

- 1½-2 cups cooked roast beef (cut in bite size pieces)
- ½ lb. of fresh mushrooms, sliced, OR
  - 1 (14 oz) can of sliced mushrooms drained
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 3 tablespoons margarine
- 1 (10 ¾ oz) can low-fat, low sodium cream of mushroom soup
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup cooking sherry, wine or water
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder and salt and pepper to taste
- ¼ cup low-fat sour cream
- 6-8 ounces uncooked egg noodles (any width)

Melt margarine in a large skillet. Add fresh sliced mushrooms and chopped onion to pan. (If you use canned mushrooms, add them later). Stir the onion and mushrooms often while they cook and soften. Add cooked beef to the skillet, stir well and reduce the heat to medium-low.

In a small bowl, mix together cream of mushroom soup, flour and sherry. Add soup mixture, garlic powder, salt and pepper to the skillet. Stir well. Let this mixture heat until bubbly and then reduce the heat. Simmer for 15-30 minutes. Stir often to prevent sticking. Before serving, stir in sour cream (if using canned mushrooms, add them here.) and heat through. Serve over noodles or rice. Serves 4-6.