

▶ MAKE EASY AND HEALTHY FAMILY MEALS!

A few steps can help you make easy, healthy family meals on a budget. Find time to plan and prepare healthier meals each week. Use the time you save to enjoy your family.

▶ PLAN

Plan your family meals. Think about meals, snacks, and beverages you will serve throughout the week. Write down a list of foods you need to prepare your meals or keep the list in a wallet, purse, or on a mobile phone. Focus your budget on foods that are healthier for your family such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, dairy, and protein foods.

- **Use a shopping list to stay on track.** Review coupons and sales to find less expensive foods. Look in newspapers or weekly store flyers to find sales and coupons for foods that you need. 💰
- **Join a store's bonus or reward card program to receive more savings.** Visit the store's customer service desk or website for information about how to sign up. 💰
- **Choose foods that cost less all year long.** Beans and eggs are low-cost healthy protein foods. Frozen vegetables like spinach and green beans are also low-cost options. 💰
- **Stock your kitchen.** Select foods that you can make and serve quickly on busy days, such as:
 - Canned beans and fish
 - Canned low-salt or low-sodium vegetables or soups
 - Whole-grain pasta, brown rice, and quick-cooking oats

- **Store fresh foods right away to keep them fresh longer.** Use fresh fruits, vegetables, and milk quickly to prevent them from spoiling.
- **Buy fruits and vegetables in season.** Some fruits and vegetables, such as peaches or corn, are cheaper when you buy them in season. Look for sales in the grocery store and your local farmers markets for cheaper choices. Many farmers markets accept SNAP benefits. 💰



Keep ingredients such as seasonings, flour, baking powder, herbs, and oils in your pantry to help you quickly prepare healthy meals.

💰 BUDGET-FRIENDLY TIP

HANDOUT:
MYPLATE FAMILY MEALS

► PREPARE

Do some tasks in advance. Make meals on the weekends when you have more time. Prepare extra and freeze some meals to use later in the week. Find ways to save yourself time during the weekdays when everyone is busier.

- **Look for shortcuts.** Grated, chopped, or pre-washed foods cost more but often save time in the kitchen. Compare prices on these items. Look for sales on easy to prepare foods such as frozen veggies or mixed salads. 💰
- **Prepare a meal that kids and adults will enjoy.** Try not to make a separate meal for each person. If your child likes plain vegetables, meat, rice, or noodles, set some aside before you add other ingredients.
- **Serve no-cook meals.** Make simple meals like salads with canned tuna and beans or cold sandwiches with lean meats and sliced vegetables. Find information about meal planning, shopping, and creating healthy meals at ChooseMyPlate.gov/budget/index.html.
- **Cook when you have more time.** On the weekends, make soups, stews, or casseroles. Cook larger amounts of lean ground beef or turkey and use some for chili or spaghetti later in the week. Freeze some of your meals for really hectic days.
- **Look for recipes with fewer ingredients.** Choose recipes with only a few ingredients that can be prepared quickly. Visit WhatsCooking.fns.usda.gov for ideas.
- **Involve kids in family meals.** Let children help with simple tasks like washing fruits, choosing the veggies, setting the table, or measuring foods. On busy weekdays, give everyone a task to help you get dinner on the table.



Farmers markets often carry foods grown locally. Find a local market near you by visiting: search.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets



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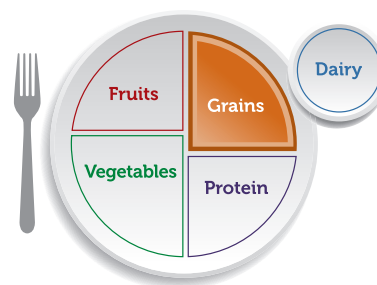
▶ MAKE HALF YOUR GRAINS WHOLE GRAINS

The grains group includes breads, cereals, rice, and pasta. All grains are made with some of the grain kernel but whole grains include the entire kernel. When parts of the grain are removed, it is called a refined grain. Enriched grains have nutrients added back in. Both whole grains and enriched grains provide good nutrition. Whole grains often have more fiber, which helps to keep your body regular. Adults and children who need 2,000 calories should eat about 6 ounces of grains each day. Three of those ounces should be whole-grain.

Serve a variety of grains such as:

- **1 cup of 100% whole-wheat flakes** (counts as 1 ounce of whole grains).

- **Two slices of 100% whole-wheat bread in a sandwich** (counts as 2 ounces of whole grains).
- **1 cup of cooked rice** (counts as 2 ounces of grains).
- **One medium corn tortilla** (counts as 1 ounce of grains).



▶ TIPS ON EATING WHOLE GRAINS

Make at least half your grains whole grains. Use whole-grain bread in sandwiches, mix brown rice with vegetables, and use whole-wheat pasta in dishes like spaghetti.

Eat whole grains to keep you on track. Many whole grains provide health benefits, like fiber, which helps to keep the body regular.

Check the package. Look on the package and ingredient list for the words “100% whole grain” or “100% whole wheat.” Some grains say “bran” or “100% wheat” and may not contain any whole grain. Brown or dark colors are not a sign that foods are made with whole grains.

Try whole grains for breakfast! Choose whole-wheat cereal, oatmeal, or whole-grain waffles.

What about whole-grain snacks? Try whole-grain cereals such as shredded wheat or toasted oats. Popcorn is a great snack, when made with little or no butter or salt.

Give kids whole-grain foods without the extras. Many grain foods such as cookies, cakes, pies, and donuts have a lot of solid fats and added sugars. Serve these foods less often.

To find the right amount of grains for members of your family, visit <http://choosemyplate.gov/supertracker-tools/daily-food-plans.html> or SuperTracker.usda.gov.



▶ STIR-FRIED GREEN RICE, EGGS, AND TURKEY HAM

COOK TIME: 1 hour and 20 minutes

MAKES: six 1-cup servings

INGREDIENTS:

- 1¾ cups brown rice, long-grain, regular, dry
- ⅓ tsp salt
- ¾ cup frozen chopped spinach, thawed, drained
- 6 large whole eggs, beaten
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- ½ cup extra-lean turkey ham, diced ¼" (2 ounces)
- ¼ cup fresh green onions, diced
- 1 teaspoon sesame or vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon low-sodium soy sauce

DIRECTIONS:

1. Combine brown rice and 4½ cups water in a large pot and bring to a boil. Turn heat down to low. Cover and cook about 30-40 minutes, until water is absorbed. Fluff with a fork. Add salt to rice. Mix well. Set aside. (A rice cooker may be used with the same quantity of brown rice and water.)
2. Drain water from spinach by squeezing thawed spinach with hands. Set aside.
3. Whisk together eggs and 1 tablespoon of water. Cook half of the eggs in a large nonstick skillet coated with nonstick cooking spray. Remove eggs from skillet to cool. Chop cooled eggs and set aside. Reserve the remaining eggs for step 5.
4. Heat vegetable oil in a wok or a large nonstick skillet over high heat. Add ham and cook for 2 minutes or until ham begins to brown.
5. Reduce heat to medium. Add brown rice and toss to mix. Add remaining eggs. Stir for 5 minutes or until egg is fully cooked. Add green onions, spinach, chopped egg, sesame oil, and soy sauce. Stir well. Cook until thoroughly heated. Serve hot.



NUTRIENTS PER SERVING:

Calories 238, Protein 9 g, Dietary Fiber 3 g, Total Fat 7 g, Saturated Fat 1 g, Cholesterol 74 mg, Sodium 313 mg.

(Team Nutrition, Recipe for Healthy Kids: Cookbook for Homes)



For more recipes visit
WhatsCooking.fns.usda.gov.



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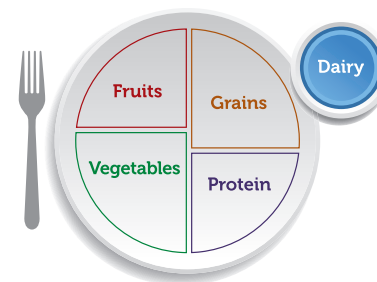
▶ GET YOUR DAIRY

Dairy foods offer important nutrition for you and your family. Choose low-fat or fat-free dairy foods to get the calcium and vitamin D your body needs for strong teeth and bones. If you can't drink milk, try calcium-fortified soymilk (soy beverage), low-fat yogurt, cheese, or calcium-enriched foods. Adults and children who need 2,000 calories daily should eat or drink about 3 cups of dairy each day.

Serve different types of dairy such as:

- 1 cup of low-fat milk on cereal (counts as 1 cup of dairy)

- ½ cup of calcium-fortified soymilk with your meal (counts as ½ cup of dairy)
- 1 cup of low-fat plain yogurt (counts as 1 cup of dairy)
- 1 slice (1 ounce) of low-fat cheddar cheese on a sandwich (counts as ½ cup of dairy).



▶ TIPS TO GET YOUR DAIRY

Make the switch to low-fat and fat-free milk. Some kids and adults may need to make the change from full-fat dairy slowly. First, switch from whole to 2% milk (reduced-fat). Later, change to low-fat (1%) or skim (fat-free) milk.

Keep dairy food on your shopping list. Keep a list of dairy foods that your family will eat such as low-fat milk or yogurt. Check online and look at your grocery receipt for coupons to help you save more on dairy foods. 💰

Use low-fat plain yogurt for toppings and sauces. Some foods are not part of the dairy food group, like cream, sour cream, cream cheese, and butter. They are high in solid fat and have little or no calcium. Add low-fat or fat-free milk to your coffee

or tea instead of cream. Use low-fat yogurt instead of sour cream for cooking.

If you have trouble drinking milk, try soymilk (soy beverage). If you don't or can't drink cow's milk, fortified soymilk is a great choice.

Add a little cheese to meals and snacks. Look for lower fat cheeses like part-skim mozzarella, or reduced-fat Swiss or cheddar. Serve low-fat choices with foods like sliced cucumbers, apples, or 100% whole-grain crackers.

Show kids that dairy is important. Make a point to eat and drink dairy foods daily. Chocolate milk, flavored yogurt, frozen yogurt, and pudding have calcium but also a lot of added sugar. Serve them on special days and less often.

💰 BUDGET-FRIENDLY TIP

To find the right amount of dairy foods for members of your family, visit <http://choosemyplate.gov/supertracker-tools/daily-food-plans.html> or SuperTracker.usda.gov.



▶ **BATIDO SMOOTHIE**

TOTAL TIME: 10 minutes

MAKES: 4 servings

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups papaya chunks, fresh or frozen*
- 2 bananas, overripe and sliced
- 1 cup yogurt, plain low-fat**
- 1 cup ice cubes

DIRECTIONS:

1. Put all the ingredients in the blender.
2. Put the lid on tightly. Turn the blender to a medium setting and blend about 1 minute until the ice is chopped and the mixture is smooth.
3. Serve right away, or cover and refrigerate up to 4 hours.

*Frozen or fresh strawberries, blueberries, or raspberries can be used in addition to or instead of papaya.

**Low-fat milk, soy, rice, almond, or coconut milk can be used instead of yogurt.



NUTRIENTS PER SERVINGS:

Calories 118, Protein 4 g, Dietary Fiber 3 g, Total Fat 1 g, Saturated Fat 1 g, Cholesterol 4 mg, Sodium 46 mg.



For more recipes visit
WhatsCooking.fns.usda.gov.



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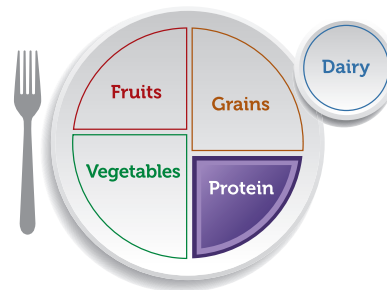
▶ LOOK FOR LEAN PROTEIN FOODS

Protein foods include meat, poultry, fish and other seafood, beans, eggs, nuts and seeds. Most of us eat enough protein every day. Eating both animal and plant sources offers variety and can help you stay within your budget. Adults and children who need 2,000 calories daily should eat about 5½ ounces of protein foods each day.

Include protein foods such as:

- **One whole egg** (counts as 1 ounce of protein)

- **½ cup cooked black beans** (counts as 2 ounces of protein)
- **One half of a small chicken breast** (counts as 2 to 3 ounces of protein)



▶ TIPS ON CHOOSING LEAN PROTEIN FOODS:

Trim the extra. Much of the fat in chicken and turkey is in or under the skin. Remove skin and fat for a leaner meal. Compare prices for lean meats with the fat already trimmed or poultry with the skin removed. 💰

Add a few nuts to your meal or snack. Nuts are a good source of protein but can be high in calories. Keep your servings small—1 ounce of almonds is about 20 to 24 nuts. Try peanut butter on apple slices, celery, or 100% whole-grain crackers.

Fry foods less often. Bake, broil, or microwave lean beef, pork, chicken, and turkey. You can use a lot less oil by cooking in an oven or microwave. Make protein foods with little or no added fat.

Try eating seafood at least 2 times per week. Buy fresh or canned fish, like tuna or salmon, when it's on sale. Canned fish usually costs less. 💰

Buy choices that fit your budget. Serve low-cost protein foods like beans, peas, and eggs to save money. Stock up on canned beans and peas when they are on sale. 💰

Keep your food safe! Wash your hands, utensils, and cutting boards before and after contact with raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs.

💰 BUDGET-FRIENDLY TIP

To find the right amount of protein foods for members of your family, visit <http://choosemyplate.gov/supertracker-tools/daily-food-plans.html> or SuperTracker.usda.gov.

▶ **MEDITERRANEAN CHICKEN AND WHITE BEAN SALAD**

TOTAL TIME: 20 minutes

MAKES: 4 servings

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup cooked chicken thighs, skinless, diced into ½-inch pieces
- 1 (15.5-ounce) canned white beans, low-sodium, drained
- 1 cucumber, peeled, diced into ½-inch pieces
- ¼ onion, peeled, chopped into ½-inch pieces
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon dried or fresh basil
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper

DIRECTIONS:

1. Put everything in the bowl and gently toss.
2. Additional vegetables can be added such as ½ cup of diced bell pepper or ½ cup of celery.
3. Serve right away or cover and refrigerate up to 2 days.



NUTRIENTS PER SERVING:

Calories 297, Protein 20 g, Dietary Fiber 8 g, Total Fat 11 g, Saturated Fat 2 g, Cholesterol 32 mg, Sodium 546.



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