

A top-down view of a white spiral-bound notebook with a green cover, lying on a light-colored surface. The notebook is open to a blank page. A silver pen with a black cap is placed vertically on the right side of the page. The notebook is surrounded by fresh ingredients: three whole carrots in the top left, a clear plastic container with three brown eggs in the top right, several stalks of green asparagus on the right, two red apples on the left, a sliced kiwi and several walnuts in the bottom left, and a brown paper bag with bread rolls in the bottom right. The background is a light, textured surface.

# MEAL PREP TIP SHEETS

# What is Meal Prep?

- Cooking or preparing meals or snacks in advance

## Benefits of Meal Prep

- Help achieve your health goals
- Saves time
- Saves money
- Reduces food waste
- Reduces stress



## Different Styles of Meal Prep

### Cook & Freeze or Refrigerate

- Prepare large batches of a meal(s), ingredient(s), or snack(s) and store in freezer for later date or fridge for the next 3-4 days
  - Ideas: lasagna, soup, casseroles, pasta dishes, chili, meatballs, chicken, fish, energy balls, muffins



### Pre-Portioned Meals

- Meals or snacks are made in advance, portioned into serving-sized containers, refrigerated, and then reheated to eat during the week
- Ideas: Casserole, lasagna, curry, pasta dish, one pot chicken & rice, hummus with chopped veggies, overnight oats



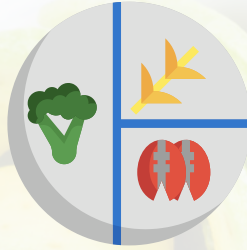
### Make-ahead Ingredients

- Prep single ingredient items (such as protein, carbs, or vegetables) ahead of time or purchase them
- Ideas: large batch of quinoa, rice, pasta, roasted vegetables, chopped raw veggies, chopped fruit, grilled chicken, baked salmon, hard boiled eggs, baked tofu, protein bars, protein powder, pre-washed lettuce, hummus, nut butter, crackers



# What is a Balanced Meal?

- Try to aim to fill half your plate/bowl/dish with vegetables, about a quarter with protein, and a quarter with whole grain carbohydrates



# What is a Filling Snack?

- Pair 2-3 of the following with a fruit or veg:
  - Protein + Carb + Fat with Fruit or Veg
- **Examples:**
  - Banana muffin with fruit
  - Cottage cheese on toast with blueberries
  - Peanut butter with apple slices
  - Hard boiled egg with cheese, crackers and cherry tomatoes
  - Yogurt with berries and granola



# How to Meal Prep

- Choose preferred meal prep style
- Determine meals/snacks you'd like to focus on
- At the start of each week make your menu, recipes, and shopping list
- Schedule time for meal prep (be consistent)
- Get cooking (start with recipe that takes the longest)
- Store your food properly (food safety & storage containers)



# Meal Prep Tips

- **Start small and build up**

- Start with prepping one snack, meal, or ingredient and then slowly build up each week until you reach your desired amount (such as 2-3 meals and 1-2 snacks each week)



- **Choose simple recipes**

- Choose recipes that have simple ingredients that you typically have on hand or can easily purchase.
- Go for one pot, one pan, one bowl dishes or recipes that don't require cooking, such as salads or sandwiches



- **Keep a list of your favourite meals, snacks and recipes**

- Refer to it when you lack inspiration or are out of ideas



- **Incorporate fruit and veggies**

- Add spinach or kale to smoothies, soups, chilis or add vegetables to omelette, make banana muffins, etc.



- **Get creative!**

- Try new recipes, discover youtube cooking channels, blogs, cookbooks



- **Prevent food spoilage**

- Consume refrigerated meals within 3-4 days and frozen meals within 1-3 months



# Meal Prep Strategies

If cooking is tiring, cook one small dish over a few days



Cook when you have the most energy



Get caregivers/family involved: you can prepare menu and shopping list and they can cook



Purchase ingredients that are easy to put together, frozen fruit+veg, frozen meals, canned goods, pre-cut veg



No shame in ordering takeout, using meal kit deliveries, or online grocery delivery



Make large batches and freeze meals to last for weeks



Rest in between cooking



Bring out all ingredients and tools to table before you start cooking



This information does not constitute medical advice for any individual. As specific cases may vary from the general information presented here, we advise readers to consult a qualified health care professional on an individual basis.

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