

Menu planning checklist

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Make sure that your daily menu abides by this list and you will be on the fast track to a healthy diet.

Food Type	Check ✓	Servings	
Cereals			X 2
Oats or Mealiemeal or Sorghum or Wheat or Any Unrefined Cereal		X 1	
Wholewheat bread		X 1	
Fruit			X 2
Orange or Guava or Tomato		X 1	
Any other fruit		X 1	
Protein			X 2
Meat or Fish or Poultry		X 1	
Beans or Lentils or Nuts or Cheese or Eggs		X 1	
Vegetables			X 4
Potatoes or Sweet Potatoes		X 1	
Cooked Vegetables		X 2	
Raw Vegetables		X 1	

When Menu Planning Remember:

- 1. Always consider the nutritional value of the food first**
- 2. Plan a variety of different types of vegetables.**

For example pick 3 of the following:

 - a. Rooty Vegetable (Carrot, Beetroot etc.) x 1 serving
 - b. Leafy Vegetable (Lettuce, Spinach etc.) x 1 serving
 - c. Flowery Vegetable (Cauliflower, Broccoli etc.) x 1 serving
 - d. Other (Pumpkin, Marrow, Squash etc.) x 1 serving
- 3. Plan a variety of colours.** For example, do not only have orange vegetables, try to get three different colours on the plate.
- 4. Keep flavour in mind.** Pick a strongly flavoured recipe and arrange the other foods to compliment that recipe. For example, if you make a Rump Steak as the main dish, it would be unwise to have a bean curry on the plate. The steak and curry will compete with each other and overwhelm the taste buds. Try to keep all other foods on the plate neutral and enhance the strongly flavoured recipe.
- 5. Keep texture and shape varied.** If you boil all your vegetables they all become mush and make for a boring meal. Try serve some raw (like carrot), some whole (like baked potatoes) and others mashed or chopped (like pumpkin).
- 6. Avoid using the same main ingredient in two recipes.** For example, do not make pumpkin pie as the desert and serve pumpkin in the main meal.
- 7. Keep seasonal foods in mind.** Learn which fruits and vegetables are in season when, also learn what fruits and vegetables are grown locally in your area. If you buy fruits in season and fruits that are common to your area not only will they be cheaper, but they will also be healthier as they won't have been frozen in storage and transportation.
- 8. Look at your leftovers.** Try to use the leftovers at the next meal. Most leftovers are great for lunch the next day. Bring the possibility of leftovers into your meal planning.
- 9. Cook together.** If your oven is big enough, try to cook all the meals at the same time. For example, consider the oven temperature for the roast chicken, and plan a desert that uses a similar oven temperature, then cook them both at the same time. This saves electricity/gas.
- 10. One hot dish.** Try to serve at least one hot dish each day, even in summer. I don't mean hot as in spicy, but rather hot as in warm. In summer you can cook meat on the outdoor grill if it is too warm to use an oven indoors.
- 11. Fruits as desserts.** Fruit makes wonderful dessert after a main meal. It doesn't take a lot of energy to chop up a banana and serve it with custard, and it is healthier than most puddings.
- 12. Presentation on the table.** Think about how the meal will be presented on the table. I encourage eating at a table if you can do so, also teach children to dish up for themselves as young as possible, this will avoid serving too much to somebody and it going to waste, either by being left on the plate or by force-feeding and the meal going to waste in the person's body.
- 13. Plan in advance.** Plan your meals as long in advance as you can stick to.