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scoresideos You've heard the hype surrounding meal planning. Some moms swear by it – or at least advise others to do it. It's supposed to save you time, money, stress, and even get your picky kid to eat. Sounds like a magic bullet!But the idea of meal planning can seem overwhelming. What is meal planning, anyway? How are you supposed to actually do it?What is meal planning?In a nutshell, meal planning is organizing at least some of your meals ahead of time. If that sounds vague, it's because there are so many ways to do it, and you have to find the way that fits you best.Where to meal planSome people like to make the meal plans themselves. You can use the pen and paper method, actually a food plan in a diary, organizer, or even on random scraps of paper. You can also keep a plan digitally, on a spreadsheet, digital calendar, or on a notes app.Or you can buy a meal plan. There are set meal plans that get emailed out, apps, and various websites with member only access.Of course, here at Real Plans, we're a fan of our own system. We have desktop and mobile versions of the app, where we provide a meal plan for as many meals as you want, as well as the option to add your own ideas. We can also store your specific recipes for future use.When to meal planMeal plans can be in as far advance as you want, or not. If you walk by a farmer's market everyday, for example, you can stop there to pick up fresh ingredients for the next day. Planning for a week or two is the most popular option – plan on a Friday, for example, shop on Saturday, and prep on Sunday. You can even plan for an entire month at a time.How to meal planFigure out your flowBefore you plan out elaborate banquets, think about how your days work (and how here). But maybe mornings are a rush out the door and cooking works better if you let an Instant Pot live up to its name. Or a combination, like prepping in the morning to cook in the evening, or prepping in the evening to finish in the morning.Also think about what kitchen gadgets that you have (or want to have) that will be most suited to your flow. Pressure cookers may be all the rage, but it is only helpful to you if it fits with when and how you cook.Find recipesA meal plan has to have recipes, right? Hands up if you've ever sat down to meal plan and come up with zero ideas of what to cook.When you meal plan, sources of inspiration can involve cookbooks, your Pinterest account (how many meals have you pinned and never made?), and blogs. You don't even have to follow the recipe exactly, but they can remind you of meals you already know how to cook, or something similar that you've always wanted to try. The recipe collections are to get the creative juices flowing.The best source of inspiration, however, is your own family. Ask them to name their favorite five meals, or keep a running list of what your family likes to eat over the course of a few months. Bingo, meals you know your family likes.Here at Real Plans, we populate your plan with recipes so you don't have to think about it, but also leave it flexible so you can add your own in. You can also peruse and choose from our extensive collection of recipes, which gets even bigger when you opt for add-ons, bloggers with amazing recipes in your diet type.Put together the planSo you've figured out your cooking flow, you've found sources for recipes, now what are you going to cook when?A simple way to keep it organized is to have a themed day for each day of the week. Mexican Mondays, Pasta Tuesdays, Soup Wednesdays, etc. Then, when finding recipes, it's easier to choose from a narrower theme.For those who eat meat, planning one big meaty meal, preferably with bones, can influence the rest of the week. Roast a chicken (or bone-in chuck roast, or ribs), use leftovers the next day, and make soup from the bones the third day. You can also use sales as a place to start planning. Look in fliers or online, i.e. without going into the actual store, for smart picks. If there is a great sale or coupon on ground meat or carrots, you can plan shepherd's pie one day and carrot soup another.Get the foodBased on your meal plan, create a shopping list of ingredients you need to buy. Make sure to check the pantry for items you already have. You might shop online and have it delivered, order online and pick up groceries, go to a brick and mortar store, or frequent a market, whichever option or combination works for you.Guess what? Real Plans creates a shopping list automatically, even with imported recipes included in the plan. And on top of that, it's connected to Instacart, so with a few clicks you can choose your favorite store and have all your ingredients in the cart. Shopping doesn't get any easier than that.Execute the planThis is the hardest part. You've put all this energy into planning, but that plan ain't gonna cook itself.If actually cooking makes you tired just thinking about it, try thinking of cooking positively. I know, it can get to be a daily grind. But it can also be a way to show that you care enough about your family, and yourself, to take the time to make home cooked meals. It can be an outlet for creativity, a form of art. Even if it isn't always appreciated by the audience.Cooking doesn't have to be limited to you though. You can share your plan – which is super easy with the Real Plan app – so your partner can cook, too. Get your kids involved in the cooking (bonus: they'll be more likely to want to eat it). They can start stirring, peeling, and chopping from a surprisingly young age, and can even make a simple meal by 10 years old, with supervision.Have a few back-upsAs we all know, life doesn't always go as planned. Things happen, making your meal plan not possible. Hopefully it's just one day.Have a few back-up recipes just in case that are quick to cook and with ingredients you always have around. However! Try to keep them for times you really need them, rather than using them all the time.Get back on the wagonMaybe you've meal planned before, but got out of the habit. Maybe this is the first time around and you've already dropped the ball. Maybe it's worked out perfectly so far – but something happens and then it doesn't.Don't worry. Figure out what went wrong, what you need to tweak, what wasn't working for you.Look into the top 10 benefits of using a meal planning software.Ask yourself more questions included here, and try again. You can do it. And maybe you'll find your magic bullet. In today's fast-paced world, where time seems to slip through our fingers, maintaining a healthy lifestyle can be a daunting task. The hustle and bustle of daily life often lead us to make hasty food choices, which might not always be the best for our overall well-being. This is where the concept of "meal plans" comes into play. In this article, we'll delve into the world of meal plans and explore their importance in helping us achieve our health and nutrition goals. So, let's begin with an Introduction to Meal Plans. Introduction to Meal Plans: What Are They? A meal plan is a structured approach to organizing your meals and snacks throughout the day or week. It involves careful consideration of your nutritional needs, dietary preferences, and goals. Meal plans can range from simple guidelines for daily eating to detailed recipes and portion sizes. These plans can be tailored to individual needs, whether you're looking to lose weight, gain muscle, manage a specific health condition, or simply maintain a balanced diet. The Importance of Meal Plans: A Balanced Approach to Nutrition Promotes Healthy Eating Habits: One of the primary benefits of following a meal plan is that it encourages healthy eating habits. When you have a well-thought-out plan, you're less likely to succumb to impulsive decisions that might involve grabbing a quick, unhealthy snack. Meal plans steer you toward consuming a variety of nutrient-rich foods, which is crucial for overall health. Aids in Weight Management: For those aiming to shed excess pounds or maintain a healthy weight, meal plans are an essential tool. By planning your meals and controlling portion sizes, you can keep track of your calorie intake more effectively. This helps prevent overeating and ensures you're consuming the right balance of macronutrients for your goals. Saves Time and Effort: In the midst of busy schedules, it's easy to resort to convenient, processed foods. However, meal plans streamline your grocery shopping and cooking process. With a clear list of ingredients and recipes, you can save time, avoid frequent trips to the store, and reduce the stress of deciding what to cook each day. Enhances Nutritional Intake: Introduction to Meal Plans means you have the opportunity to incorporate a diverse range of foods into your diet. This diversity translates into a broader spectrum of essential vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants that your body requires to function optimally. By strategically planning your meals, you can ensure that your nutritional needs are being met consistently. Balances Macronutrients: Effective meal planning allows you to strike the right balance between carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. This balance is key to maintaining energy levels, supporting muscle growth and repair, and ensuring the proper functioning of your body's systems. Supports Specific Goals: Whether you're an athlete aiming to enhance performance, someone managing a health condition like diabetes, or an individual with dietary restrictions, meal plans can be customized to cater to your specific needs. They provide you with a roadmap to achieve your goals while prioritizing your well-being. Reduces Food Waste: Plan your weekly meals to avoid impulse grocery shopping.Create a list before you go to keep your spending in check.It can help reduce waste and save money overall.Ben draws up a weekly meal plan to prevent food waste, sticking to a set grocery list that aligns with his health goals.Jordan's meal prep on Sundays saves time on busy workdays and lowers impulsive takeout spending.Combining store sales with a planned menu helps Kathy slash her grocery bill significantly each month. This site may contain links to affiliate websites, and we receive an affiliate commission for any purchases made by you on the affiliate website using such links.Meal planning is deciding what you eat for a certain period, usually a week. It involves creating a menu, shopping for ingredients, and preparing meals in advance. Meal planning has become increasingly popular as people try to eat healthier, save time, and reduce food waste.One of the main benefits of meal planning is that it allows you to make healthier food choices. When you plan your meals, you have more control over what you eat and are less likely to make impulsive choices high in calories, sugar, or fat. Meal planning also helps you incorporate various foods into your diet, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean protein sources.Another advantage of meal planning is that it saves you time and money. By planning your meals, you can shop more efficiently, buy ingredients in bulk, and avoid last-minute trips to the grocery store. You can also prepare meals in advance by cooking in batches or using a slow cooker, saving you time during the week. Overall, meal planning is a simple and effective way to eat healthier, save time, and reduce food waste.Meal planning is the process of organizing your meals ahead of time. It involves deciding what you will eat for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, as well as snacks, and then preparing the ingredients and meals accordingly. Meal planning can be as simple or as complex as you want, and there are many different ways to approach it.In a nutshell, meal planning involves organizing at least some of your meals ahead of time. It can involve deciding on recipes, shopping for ingredients, and preparing meals beforehand. Meal planning can help you save time, money, and stress and can also help you eat a healthier diet.Meal planning has many benefits. Here are a few:Saves time: Planning your meals in advance can save time on grocery shopping and meal preparation. Saves money: Meal planning can help you save money by reducing food waste and allowing you to take advantage of sales and discounts. Reduces stress: Knowing what you will eat for each meal can reduce stress and eliminate the need to make decisions on the fly. Promotes healthier eating: Meal planning can help you to make healthier food choices and avoid impulsive or unhealthy food choices.There are many different types of meal planning, and what works best for you will depend on your lifestyle and preferences. Here are a few examples:Batch cooking: Preparing large batches of food before freezing or refrigerating portions for later use. Meal kits: Ordering pre-portioned ingredients and recipes to be delivered to your door. Menu planning: Creating a weekly or monthly menu of meals and then shopping for ingredients accordingly. Pantry and freezer inventory: Take stock of what you already have and plan meals around those ingredients.In conclusion, meal planning is a simple but effective way to save time, money, and stress while promoting healthier eating habits. By finding the best meal planning method for you, you can take control of your diet and enjoy delicious, nutritious meals every day.If you're new to meal planning, it can initially feel overwhelming. But with a little effort, it can become a habit that saves you time, money, and stress in the long run. Here are some steps to get started:Before you start meal planning, it's helpful to assess your needs. Consider your dietary restrictions, preferences, and budget. Do you have any food allergies or intolerances? Are you trying to lose weight or build muscle? Do you have a limited budget? You can create a meal plan that works for you by understanding your needs.Setting goals can help you stay motivated and focused. Think about why you want a meal plan. Are you trying to save time? Eat healthier? Reduce food waste? You can tailor your meal plan to meet your needs by setting specific goals.Once you've assessed your needs and set your goals, it's time to create a meal plan. Start by choosing recipes that meet your dietary needs and preferences. Look for recipes that are easy to prepare and can be made in large batches. Consider planning meals that use similar ingredients to reduce waste and save money. There are several ways to create a meal plan. You can use a printable template, a meal-planning app, or a spreadsheet. Some meal-planning apps even generate grocery lists based on your meal plan.Once you've created your meal plan, it's time to make a grocery list. Check your pantry and fridge to see what you already have on hand. Then, make a list of the ingredients you need to buy. Organize your list by category (e.g., produce, dairy, meat) to make shopping easier.By following these steps, you can start meal planning with confidence. Remember, meal planning is a process that takes practice. Don't be afraid to experiment with different recipes and meal-planning strategies until you find what works best.Meal planning can be a great way to save time and money and reduce stress during the week. Here are some tips to help make your meal planning a success:One key to successful meal planning is to keep it simple. Don't try to plan elaborate meals with complicated recipes that require much time and effort. Stick to simple, easy-to-prepare meals you and your family will enjoy.While it's important to keep it simple, you don't want to get stuck in a rut of repeatedly eating the same meals. Make sure to include a variety of foods and flavors in your meal plan to keep things interesting. You can also try new recipes and ingredients to keep things fresh.Cooking in batches is a great way to save time and ensure you always have healthy meals. When planning meals, choose recipes that can be easily doubled or tripled so you can cook once and eat several times throughout the week.Leftovers are a great way to save time and reduce waste. When you're meal planning, try to plan meals that can be repurposed into new dishes later in the week. For example, you can use leftover roasted chicken to make a chicken salad or use leftover veggies to make a stir-fry.Meal planning is a great tool, but it's important to be flexible and adjust your plan as needed. If you have a busy week, plan meals that can be prepared ahead of time or require minimal cooking. And if you have unexpected leftovers or ingredients, don't be afraid to switch up your meal plan to incorporate them.By following these tips, you can successfully plan meals and enjoy healthy, delicious meals throughout the week.Meal planning can be daunting, but with the help of various tools and resources, it can become a breeze. Some popular tools and resources can help you plan your meals efficiently.Meal planning apps are a great way to keep track of your meals and grocery lists. Some popular meal-planning apps include:Mealime: This app provides personalized meal plans based on your dietary preferences and generates grocery lists based on your chosen recipes. Plan to Eat: This app allows you to import recipes from various websites, plan your meals, and generate grocery lists. Paprika: This app saves recipes from various websites, plans your meals, and generates grocery lists.Cookbooks are a great way to get inspiration for your meals. Some popular meal-planning cookbooks include:The Skinnytaste Cookbook: This cookbook provides healthy and flavorful recipes that are easy to make. The Budget-Friendly Fresh and Local Diabetes Cookbook: This cookbook provides healthy, delicious, and budget-friendly recipes. The Complete Meal Prep Cookbook: This cookbook provides easy-to-make recipes that are perfect for meal prepping.Meal planning websites provide a wealth of information on meal planning, recipes, and grocery shopping. Some popular meal-planning websites include:Cook Smarts: This website provides weekly meal plans, recipes, and grocery lists. EatingWell: This website provides healthy and delicious recipes, meal plans, and grocery shopping tips. The Kitchen: This website provides meal-planning tips, recipes, and grocery shopping guides.Meal delivery services provide pre-prepared meals that can be delivered to your doorstep. Some popular meal delivery services include:Blue Apron: This service provides pre-measured ingredients and recipes that can be cooked in under 45 minutes. HelloFresh: This service provides pre-measured ingredients and recipes that can be cooked in under 30 minutes. Freshly: This service provides pre-cooked meals that can be heated in under 3 minutes.In conclusion, meal planning tools and resources can make it easy. Whether you prefer using apps, cookbooks, websites, or meal delivery services, plenty of options are available to suit your needs.Meal planning is a simple yet effective way to take control of your eating habits and make healthier choices. By planning your meals ahead of time, you can reduce stress, save time and money, and avoid impulsive decisions about what to eat.In this article, we've covered the basics of meal planning, including how to get started, the benefits of meal planning, and some tips for success. Remember that meal planning is flexible, and there's no one-size-fits-all approach. You can customize your meal plan to suit your preferences, dietary needs, and lifestyle.Some key takeaways from this article include:Meal planning can save time and money by reducing food waste and avoiding last-minute takeout or delivery orders. Planning can help you make healthier choices and avoid impulsive buys at the grocery store. Meal planning doesn't have to be complicated or time-consuming. Start small and gradually build up to planning more meals each week. Use tools like recipe websites, cookbooks, and meal-planning apps to help you find inspiration and stay organized.Remember, meal planning aims to make your life easier and more enjoyable, not to add more stress or complexity. With some planning and preparation, you can enjoy delicious, healthy meals all week.As an Amazon Associate, I can earn from qualifying purchases. From WikiEducator Dzifa is a housewife with three school age children. Every morning she wakes up with the problem of what to feed her family on for the day. Sometimes she is able to think quickly about what to cook but at other times it becomes very difficult to figure out what foods to put together to make a meal. Have you ever found yourself in a similar situation? Waking up and not knowing what to eat. If you learn how to plan meals, thinking of what to eat or cook will be a thing of the past. You would find that planning what to eat becomes a very interesting and life fulfilling past time. Objective The objective of this course is to facilitate to stakeholders how to improve quality of work on distant learning mode online. LESSON CONTENT The vocabulary of meal planning A meal is a made up of all the foods eaten for breakfast or lunch or supper. It is usually made up of the main dish and its accompaniment, the dessert and the appetizer. A dish refers to a food served in one plate or bowl for example 'fufu' is a dish and so is the soup served with it. A main dish is the dish that contains the protein part of a meal. It is eaten with an accompaniment which is usually the carbohydrate part of the meal. A course is made up of one or more dishes eaten together in a meal. For example light soup and fufu is a course in a meal. A menu is a collection of dishes served in a meal. Goals of meal planning The vocabulary you have just reviewed gives you an insight into the various technical words used in meal planning. Now let us look at some of the reasons why we must plan our meals. If you just pick any foods you have around and put them together, you may not be lucky to get all the nutrients your body needs with your combination. With careful meal planning you will consider so that you can get as much nutrients as possible. So, one of the reasons why we plan meals is to provide a nutritious meal for those who will eat it. You know from the previous unit that the food we eat must supply our bodies with essential nutrients like carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins, minerals and fats. All persons need all these nutrients but the amount they need would vary from one person to another depending on peoples physiological state, whether they are old, pregnant, young, lactating etc. All the essential nutrients can be provided by a diet which includes foods from the six food groups. You have already studied these groups in unit 1. Can you remember them? Each person's nutritional needs can be met by planning meals for the entire day. The day's total nutrient intake is usually divided among breakfast, lunch, supper and snacks. Breakfast, usually, should provide one-quarter of the days total nutrient needs. A good breakfast should provide energy and a lot of vitamin C. People who do manual work or are very active may decide to eat a heavy breakfast. It is important to eat something in the morning before starting work to prevent mid-morning fatigue. Lunch should supply one-third of the daily nutrients need. Food should provide all the nutrients the body needs. For growing children it is important for them to have a good lunch because breakfast and supper alone can not provide all the needed nutrients. For many people supper is the one meal of the day which can be eaten leisurely and shared. For some families it is the only meal of the day. It should provide a good supply of all the nutrients. Snacks are in between meals eaten to satisfy nutritional needs as well as hunger. If well planned snacks should provide the remaining percentage of nutrients which are not provided by breakfast, lunch and supper. They should be chosen so that they do not provide excess calories but enough of other nutrients as well Write down all the foods you ate yesterday and divide them into breakfast, lunch and supper and snack as shown in the table. Breakfast Lunch Supper Snack Do you think the food you ate provided all the nutrients you needed? Planned Spending One important goal of meal planning is to provide the necessary foods to meet nutrients needs with the money available. The amount of money spent on food depends on several factors some of which are your income your ability to choose foods well your shopping skills your food preferences your values your time Now let us examine each of these factors and see how they affect our spending. The higher your income the more money you spend on food. People with more money tend to buy expensive food without thinking about it. Your time for shopping would determine how willing you are to stop and bargain so you can get your food at the cheapest prize. Your values would affect how much you spend on food because if you value health for example you would want to spend money to buy foods which will provide the necessary nutrients. If you value clothes you can go without food so that you will get money to pay for the latest clothes. Template:ACTIVITY Preparing satisfying meals A meal should be accepted and enjoyed. People will eat the foods they like best. Food acceptance is affected by factors like ethnic origin, religion, socio-economic status etc. We met all of these when we were discussing food habits in unit one. In addition to the above factors, flavour, colour, texture and temperature would also affect food acceptance. Flavour which is a combination of taste and aroma can make people accept foods. Foods would normally taste sweet, sour, salty or bitter. Aroma gives the smell of the food. Both taste and aroma (flavour) are important in meal planning because people accept or reject a food sometimes because of its flavour. Colour appeals to the eye when correctly used and it helps to stimulate appetite. The sight of a food can make you salivate. Colour blends are achieved using foods or using garnishes. A garnish is anything put on food to make it attractive. Texture is the feel of food in the mouth. Food is said to be hard, chewy, soft, crisp, smooth, sticky, dry, gritty and tough. When meals are planned well textures are varied to make them appealing. Planning should be such that you can have dry and moist foods, crisp and smooth foods, soft and hard foods etc. Temperature of food affects appetite. Some foods look very unattractive when they are cold. Example fried yam looks good only when it is hot. Most often fried foods look good when they are hot. Hot foods should be served hot and cold foods should be served cold. Meals are generally planned around the main dish. Do you remember what a main dish is? This dish is the focal point of the meal. All other foods must complement this dish. Desserts are planned with the main course in mind. Check the vocabulary at the beginning of this unit to find out what a main course is. The appetizer is planned with both the main course and the dessert in mind. When planning meals do the following:- Choose the main dish first Select the staple food which will accompany the main dish Add one or two vegetable dishes where necessary Choose the dessert and or the appetizer. List foods in the order in which they are served except that beverages are listed last irrespective of when they are eaten. Foods eaten together are written together. Items such as margarine, sugar cream, salad dressing are not written. Capitalize all words except prepositions and conjunctions. Plan the spacing and arrangement of the items on the menu card so that it is symmetrical. 6#.Special accompaniments must be to the right of the dish they accompany or centre the main item and write the accompaniment item underneath. Template:ACTIVITY Has this unit taught you something about planning meals? Would you behave like Dzifa the next time you are confronted with providing food for your family? Try and plan some few meals for yourself. Template:SUMMARY Interview at least 2 women who had given birth (ask if they had experience any problems/difficulties during ist trimester. if any what were they what did they did to overcome those problems Template:READING