

WEEK SIX – STOCKING YOUR KITCHEN: GROCERY SHOPPING AND TIPS TO PLAN AHEAD

An important part of a healthy eating plan is the pre-planning and stocking of the kitchen with healthy options. Pre-planning meals and snacks will help you stick to your healthy eating plan, limit cravings and eliminate reaching for unhealthy options when you have gone too long without eating. Stocking your kitchen — including the cupboards, fridge and freezer — with healthy basics will allow you to put together a healthy meal in the drop of a dime when you are in a hurry. Planning out meals and snacks and writing a list before you go to the grocery store will help you stick to your plan.

Learning:

- Stocking up on the basics
- Tips for grocery shopping
- Menu planning
 1. Be creative with leftovers
 2. Food group recommendations

Preparation to shop:

Weekly:

1. Select five dinner ideas for the week.
2. Write down five protein items, five grains and five vegetables you will need for your dinners.
3. Leftovers for lunch? If you prefer not to have leftovers, be creative and write down five lunch ideas you could make using dinner from the previous night.
4. Snacks: Think vegetables, fruits and a little protein. For example, fruit with Greek yogurt or vegetables with hummus.
5. Breakfast: Most people have two to three breakfast go-to options. The foods consumed for breakfast tend to be staple items. Think protein (meat/meat alternatives or dairy/milk alternatives) with vegetables or fruits and starches or grains. For example, toast with almond butter and strawberries; oatmeal with skim milk, walnuts and blueberries; or omelette with vegetables and whole grain toast.
6. Staples & basics: Stock up on the basics and always have a healthy back-up plan. Create your own list of staples or use the following as a guide. Decide what items are important to buy on a weekly basis and what items are better to buy monthly.
7. Write down three to five back-up ideas each for breakfast, lunch and dinner you could create using the grocery staple list.

Monthly:

Keep an ongoing list of essential condiments you use. On a monthly basis check to see what condiments need to be replaced.

Items for your grocery list: Stock up on the key ingredients to make a variety of healthy meals!

Whole grains & starch: Bakery & middle grocery store aisles:

- Wholegrain breads (e.g., Silver Hills, Healthy Way, etc.)
- Whole grain cereals (e.g., All Bran Buds, Kashi, Nature's Path and others)
- Oatmeal (steel cut or regular)
- Whole grain crackers (e.g., Wasa, Ryvita, Kashi, Finn crisps, Kalva)
- Whole wheat pasta
- Whole grain, thin crust pizza crust
- Whole grains (quinoa, spelt, millet, kamut, buckwheat, brown rice, wild rice or other whole grain)
- Wheat bran
- Cornmeal
- Yams/sweet potatoes/potatoes

Tips:

Look for cereals, breads, pasta, crackers and packaged grain products where whole grains are the first ingredients on the ingredient list. Whole grains are packed full of fibre, vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients.

Select cereals with at least two grams of fibre per serving with a goal of at least five grams per serving. Whole grains are important each and every day to help you meet your fibre needs. Fibre recommendations are 25 grams per day for women and 38 grams per day for men!

Select trans-fat free! Check the "Nutrition Facts" table for zero grams trans-fats, then look at the ingredient list and make sure there are no hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils.

Dairy: Fat-free or 1% milk, yogurt or cheese

- Yogurt: Plain, non-fat or low-fat regular or Greek. (Tip: only ingredients should be milk and probiotic bacterial cultures)
- Milk: Skim or low-fat
- Cottage cheese: Skim or low-fat
- Cheese: Low-fat or cheese made with 1% or 2% milk, and limit to no more than one 1.5 oz serving per day

Meat/Meat alternatives

- Natural nut butter (only ingredients should be nuts)
- Almonds, walnuts, flaxseed, pecans, pistachios, etc.
- Tuna or salmon canned in water
- Fresh fish (salmon, halibut, trout, shrimp)
- Eggs
- Tofu
- Hummus
- Beans/Legumes (e.g., chick peas, black beans, kidney beans , navy beans, cannellini beans, split peas and lentils)

Pick two to three of the following to have each week:

- Chicken breasts, turkey, pork-lean cuts (e.g., pork tenderloin)
- Lean red meats, (e.g., extra lean ground beef, beef tenderloin, steak, etc.)
- Deli meats: Ask how meat is prepared and request to see the nutrition information. Watch the sodium content!

Fresh produce (and frozen too!)

Fruits (eat a variety of deep dark colours of the rainbow)

- Select three to four to have per week; frozen can be a great staple (e.g., strawberries, apples, oranges, pears, blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, cantaloupe, honeydew, grapes, grapefruit, banana, tomatoes and kiwi)
- Aim for fresh, frozen or canned in water or juice with no added sugar (Tip: Fresh, frozen and canned have similar nutritional values)
- Frozen berries such as strawberries, blueberries, raspberries and blackberries can be great to include all winter long
- Select local, in season as much as possible

Vegetables (deep, dark colours and variety)

- Lettuce, cucumber, tomato, peppers, onion, carrots, broccoli, mushrooms, asparagus, baby spinach, zucchini, squash, cauliflower, cabbage, celery and more
- Frozen or canned corn or peas
- Canned pumpkin
- Canned tomato sauce and diced tomatoes

- Aim for fresh, frozen or canned in water or juice with no added salt (Tip: Fresh, frozen and canned all have similar nutritional values)
- Select local, in season as much as possible!
- Pick several options each week (e.g., salad, steamed, sautéed, sandwich, soup, etc.)

Tips for selecting frozen or canned foods:

- Select reduced-sodium or low-sodium frozen food. Salt is usually added as a preservative; however, our bodies only need a very small amount of sodium per day. Aim to consume less than 2400 mg of sodium per day.
- Select products without added sugar, canned in its own juice or water.

Condiments, herbs/spices and oils

- Salsa, Dijon mustard, vinegars, ketchup (first ingredient tomato!)
- Herbs and spices: pepper, basil, garlic, oregano, thyme, tarragon, cumin, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg and more
- Oil: olive oil, canola oil, grape seed oil (for cooking at high temperatures)
- Honey or other sweetener of choice

Time-saving tips:

1. Plan ahead

Plan ahead so you can buy all the ingredients you will need for the week in one shopping trip. Wash and chop half of your fresh produce when you get home from the grocery store; do the same with the other half mid-way through the week.

2. Cook in bulk on the weekends

Most people have more time on the weekends compared to during the week. Make sure you take advantage of this time by preparing one to two big meals that can be served for a few dinners and/or lunches or frozen in individual portions for leftovers.

3. Buy pre-chopped or semi-prepared foods when in a bind

Purchase graded cheese, pre-cut fruits and vegetables, pre-washed greens, sliced or diced meats, or even individual containers of yogurt, cottage cheese, nuts, peanut butter etc.

4. Quick cooking methods

Steam, stir-fry, boil, broil or microwave when you are short on time. Bake, roast, grill, slow-cook or braise when you have additional time!

5. One-dish meals

Be creative in how you might include all food groups in one meal idea. For example, pasta with vegetables and shrimp; stir-fry with chicken, vegetables and brown rice; sandwich with sliced turkey, lettuce, tomato, sprouts and a side of fruit; salad topped with vegetables, chick peas and a small amount of oil-based dressing; or even a pizza topped with vegetables and chicken.

6. Assemble your own meals

Make your own tacos, pizzas, burritos, salads, sandwiches or even burgers!

7. Slow-cooker success: One pot wonder

Plan ahead and stick all the ingredients in the night before or the morning of and enjoy a fresh, hot, home-cooked meal when you get home from work.

8. Essential kitchen utensils

Salad spinner, sharp knives, steamer, non-stick pans, indoor grills or griddles work great for hot meals in no time.

9. Extra on hand

Stock up on quick meal fixes such as pre-washed greens or vegetables, steamable vegetable bags, frozen whole grain rice in steamable bags, canned beans, salsa, hard boiled eggs, whole grain pasta and pasta sauce. These items can be used to make a nutritious meal in less than 15 minutes.

10. Back-up plan

Write down at least three back-up meal ideas that can be created in 15 minutes or less with the items stocked in your kitchen. With these ideas in mind, you will be less likely to eat out or reach for unhealthy options. For example, omelette with vegetables; yogurt with walnuts and blueberries; salad with canned chick peas and vegetables; egg salad sandwich; whole grain oatmeal with skim milk, ground flaxseed and banana; or even a wrap with canned tuna fish, lettuce and tomato.

Self-exploration exercises

Think about your grocery shopping and meal planning habits over the last few months. How often do you grocery shop? How do you decide what you need to buy? How often do you find yourself driving to the store mid-week for additional ingredients? How often do you find yourself in a bind for last minute meal ideas? How often do you eat out or pick up take-out because you don't have anything planned? How might you better plan ahead?

Complete the activities below to help you plan better.

Activity

1. Use your list to start grocery shopping. Keep an ongoing list on your refrigerator and when you use something up, make note of it right away.
2. Create a list with the fruits, vegetables, whole grains, meats, beans, dairy, yogurt, cheese you like. Use this as a guide to create your grocery shopping list each week.
3. Create a list of your favourite 25 recipes. Write out all of the ingredients you might need for these recipes. If they are online, print them out. If they are in a cookbook, copy or scan them and keep them in a folder or binder.
4. Be creative. How might you use your favourite recipes for lunch leftovers? If you like leftovers, you are good to go; if not, you will have to be creative!
5. Tweak your grocery shopping list for this week and go grocery shopping!

A key point to any successful plan is to complete and review your goals on an ongoing basis. Complete the following goals sheet. Putting pen to paper on what you want and need, your obstacles, challenges and back- up plan is key to long-term positive change.

1. What do you want to do?

2. Why do you want to make this change?

3. How are you going to make this change?

4. When are you going to make this change?

5. How many days per week are you planning on making this change?

6. What barriers might you encounter that might inhibit you from making this change?

7. How might you get past these barriers?

8. What is your back-up plan?

9. Evaluate your confidence and motivation for making these changes on a scale of 1–10.
