

# Healthy Choices

 How to live well and save money

Part of a special eco-series brought to you by Celebrate Community



## Meal Planning Simplified

Eating healthy is about more than looking good. Your body needs vitamins and minerals to maintain its own unique eco-system. Eating healthy is also one of the most effective ways to reduce your healthcare costs, but it's easier said than done.

Whether you skip a meal or eat three meals a day, you are faced with the recurring question, "What should I eat?" There are lots of opportunities to derail good eating habits from lack of time to prepare meals to eating too much before you realize it to eating comfort foods to combat stress. In fact for some, meal planning is simply another source of stress especially if you're taking on that task for the entire family.

Experts recommend that healthy meal planning and preparation is most effective when it's a family affair. Why? By involving your family in planning and preparing healthy meals you're teaching them healthy eating habits that they can follow wherever they are even when you're not around.

It can be equally challenging to cook for oneself. If a recipe results in more than you need, the temptation is to eat bigger portions than you should so the food doesn't go to waste.

As with any task, a little advance planning can make it easier and less expensive to eat healthy. By including a variety of useful ideas to help you plan and shop for your meals, we hope that you'll find the ones that help you keep your healthy eating habits on track.

## Free Advice

Most healthcare providers have healthy eating information on their web sites that are free regardless of membership. They also offer nutrition classes to their plan's members at no fee.



## Eat Fresh

Luckily, we live in an area where fresh produce, dairy and meat abound. Keep your recipes simple by using fresh, whole foods. Your grocery list and your grocery bill will be smaller.



## Freeze It

Now you can make big batches of food, and store them in low-cost gallon- or quart-sized vacuum bags to avoid freezer burn. Just thaw, reheat and eat your healthy, home cooked meal.



## Make a List

There's no need to start from scratch. There are plenty of online tools available for quickly printing out a grocery check list. You'll find links to some on our site.



## Budget Organic

Fruits and veggies in season are usually the lowest-priced in the produce section. Plan your menu to include them. Get a month-by-month guide to the best produce deals on our site, and put them on the menu.



## Share

Invite a friend over, and plan your meals together the day before you shop. You can relax, read through cookbooks, share recipes and stories. Buy ingredients in bulk, and divide them and their costs between your households.



More how-to tips at

[celebratecommunity.org](http://celebratecommunity.org)



**CELEBRATE  
COMMUNITY**  
[celebratecommunity.org](http://celebratecommunity.org)



With special recognition of the experts at:  
Kaiser Permanente, Empire College and G & G Supermarket.