

Top Five Tips for Meal Planning

1. Start with a notebook, app or worksheet for meal planning - find what works for your family!

- This [weekly menu planner](#) is a great place to start.
- Consider keeping your meal plans to use again in the future.
- Gather family recipes or explore online resources such as [cookspiration.com](#) and [pulses.org](#).

2. Think about three meals plus snacks each day

- Consider planning with your family to get input from each member.
- Simplify meals by basing them on 1/2 plate vegetables and fruit, 1/4 plate protein, 1/4 plate whole grains.
- Check the fridge, cupboard and freezer. Note what needs to be used up soon so it does not go to waste.

3. Incorporate leftovers into your plan

- Use leftovers for lunches or as part of another meal.
- Consider making double of your recipe so you can freeze a second meal for later.
- See Making Food Last Longer [on the PCN website](#) for leftover meal ideas.

4. Take-out or meal delivery can be part of your plan

- Including a take-out meal in your plan is normal and can help prevent purchasing more groceries than you need. Remember to wash your hands after unpacking your meal.
- For guidance on making healthier take-out choices, see [Eating Out the Healthy Way](#).

5. Create a grocery list

- Make shopping easier. Copy out ingredients from your meal plan and list foods under headings such as produce and meats. This list can easily be given to a friend or family member who may be doing your grocery shopping during this time.
- If you prefer technology, an app such as [Any List](#) can be helpful.
- Keep the pantry well stocked with healthy basics such as: whole grains, peanut butter and canned tuna, beans, lentils, and tomatoes.
- Let everyone know to add items to the list as you run out.

For sample meal plan ideas, see the resources below:

- Family Meal Plan: <https://www.unlockfood.ca/en/Articles/Menu-Planning/Family-Friendly-One-Week-Sample-Menu-Plan.aspx>
- Diabetes Prevention/Management: <https://www.unlockfood.ca/en/Articles/Diabetes/Diabetes-Menu-Plan-for-Prevention-and-Management.aspx>