In today’s busy world, cooking a meal completely from scratch may be difficult. However, convenience foods usually cost more and may be higher in calories, fat and sodium.

This is the fifth in a series of publications to help you eat well but spend less at the grocery store. It includes time/money-saving tips and sample menus with recipes that you can adapt to meet your family’s tastes.

**Plan for Busy Times**

Meal planning and advance food preparation can save you time and money. Find a block of time when you can make a few recipes at once and then freeze them for a later date. Invite your family to help. When you’re in a time crunch, allow the dish to thaw in the refrigerator for the day. Reheat in a microwave, add a side salad and dinner is ready.

**Example 1:** Make extra chili on Monday for “planned-overs” on Wednesday. Use the rest of the chili to:

- Top baked potatoes
- Make an easy casserole by combining cooked pasta shells with planned-over chili
- Make a quick and easy taco salad by topping lettuce with planned-over chili, diced tomatoes and shredded cheese

**Example 2:** Use a slow cooker to simmer your evening meal to perfection while you are at work or busy doing other things. Mix planned-over beef or
chicken, vegetables and broth in your slow cooker before you leave in morning; set on low. Serve with bread, crackers and fruit for a hearty evening meal.

Save Money When Eating Out

With busy lifestyles, sometimes grabbing a meal on the go is unavoidable. Eating out can be an occasional treat that does not have to break your budget. Consider these tips:

- When eating out, take advantage of “two for one” deals, coupons or “kids eat free” specials.
- Drink water instead of ordering soda pop.
- Share a meal, or have an appetizer as your main course.
- Order a kid’s combo when possible. Often the “kid-sized meal” has the accurate portion size for adults.
- If the portions are large, ask for a “to go” box early. Put half of your meal in the box and enjoy the rest for lunch the next day. This practice cuts calories, and it provides a second meal for you.

What’s Your MyPlate Plan?

You can find the latest nutrition recommendations at www.choosemyplate.gov.

Each person has different needs based on gender, age and level of physical activity. Learn what each of your family members needs at his or her particular calorie levels by visiting the website or contacting your local Extension agent for “MyPlate Plans” handouts for different age groups. The MyPlate Plans are available online at www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/myplate.html.

MyPlate Portion Equivalents

The MyPlate food plan uses cups and ounces instead of “servings” and calls them “equivalents.” These are some of the equivalents for the food groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grain Group</th>
<th>1 slice of bread</th>
<th>1 ounce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 cup ready-to-eat cereal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>½ c. cooked rice, pasta or cooked cereal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable Group</td>
<td>1 cup raw or cooked vegetables or vegetable juice, 2 cups raw leafy greens</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit Group</td>
<td>1 cup 100% fruit juice, 1 cup fruit, ½ cup dried fruit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy Group</td>
<td>1 cup milk or yogurt, 1½ ounces natural cheese, 2 ounces processed cheese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein Foods Group</td>
<td>1 egg; 1 ounce meat, poultry or fish; ¼ cup cooked dry beans; 1 tablespoon peanut butter; ½ ounce nuts or seeds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Size up your portions with these visual clues.

As shown, one-half of a baseball is the same size as ½ cup mashed potatoes.
Example:
MyPlate Plan and three-day menu plan for a 14-year-old female who gets less than 30 minutes of physical activity per day*

MyPlate Plan*

- Grains ...................... 6 ounces
- Vegetables ............... 2.5 cups
- Fruit ......................... 1.5 cups
- Dairy ........................ 3 cups
- Protein Foods ............ 5 ounces

Three-day Menu Plan for a 14-year-old Female*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Meal 1</th>
<th>Meal 2</th>
<th>Meal 3</th>
<th>Snack</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1</td>
<td>1 c. oatmeal</td>
<td>Tuna Salad Sandwich*</td>
<td>1 serving Oven-fried Chicken*</td>
<td>1 medium banana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>½ English muffin with 1 Tbsp. peanut butter</td>
<td>(2 slices whole-wheat bread, ¼ c. tuna salad)</td>
<td>½ c. carrots 1 Tbsp. low-fat ranch 1 c. nonfat milk</td>
<td>1 medium banana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>½ c. orange slices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 c. nonfat milk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 2</td>
<td>¾ c. Yogurt Fruit Crunch*</td>
<td>3 oz. chicken (leftover) on whole-wheat bun with lettuce and tomato ½ c. Potato Salad* ½ c. celery sticks 1 c. nonfat milk</td>
<td>1 c. Chili* 1 c. tossed salad 2 Tbsp. low-fat ranch 8 saltine crackers 1 c. apple wedges 1 c. nonfat milk</td>
<td>1 c. cereal ½ c. nonfat milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 slice whole-wheat toast</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Tbsp. peanut butter ½ c. orange juice 1 c. nonfat milk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 3</td>
<td>1 hard-cooked egg</td>
<td>1 ½ c. vegetable beef soup 8 saltine crackers and 1 oz. cheese ½ c. carrots and celery 1 nonfat milk</td>
<td>1 broiled or grilled 3-oz. hamburger patty 1 Tbsp. ketchup ½ c. mashed potatoes 1 tsp. soft margarine ½ c. green beans 1 dinner roll 1 c. canned pears 1 c. nonfat milk</td>
<td>2 c. popcorn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 slices whole-wheat toast</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 tsp. soft margarine ½ c. orange juice 1 c. nonfat milk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* indicates recipe is included

Look for Key Words on the Menu When Eating Out

Some foods prepared with less fat are considered a healthier option when eating out. Try to choose items that are baked, broiled, grilled, roasted, poached, steamed or blackened. Limit fried, braised, basted, creamed, scalloped, au-gratin, sautéed or stuffed and any foods marinated in oil.

For a healthful twist on restaurant-style foods, try the recipes for “Oven Fries” and “Crispy Baked Chicken” included in this publication.

Remember Food Safety on the Run

If you bring food along, be sure to keep perishable foods, such as meat sandwiches, milk and cut-up fruit, cold. Use insulated lunch boxes and bags with frozen gel packs or frozen juice boxes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Meal 1</th>
<th>Meal 2</th>
<th>Meal 3</th>
<th>Snack</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oatmeal</td>
<td>Tuna Salad Sandwich*</td>
<td>Oven-fried Chicken*</td>
<td>Banana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English muffin</td>
<td>Carrot sticks</td>
<td>Oven Fries*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orange slices</td>
<td>Tomato juice</td>
<td>Steamed broccoli</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nonfat milk</td>
<td>Nonfat milk</td>
<td>Dinner roll</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nonfat milk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 2</td>
<td>Yogurt Fruit Crunch*</td>
<td>Chicken (planned-over) on</td>
<td>Chili*</td>
<td>Cereal with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whole-wheat toast</td>
<td>whole-wheat bun with</td>
<td>Tossed salad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with peanut butter</td>
<td>lettuce and tomato</td>
<td>Crackers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orange juice</td>
<td>Potato Salad*</td>
<td>Apple wedges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nonfat milk</td>
<td>Celery sticks</td>
<td>Nonfat milk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 3</td>
<td>Hard-cooked egg</td>
<td>Vegetable beef soup (canned)</td>
<td>Broiled/grilled hamburger</td>
<td>Popcorn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whole-wheat egg bagel</td>
<td>Crackers and cheese</td>
<td>patties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with jam</td>
<td>Nonfat milk</td>
<td>Mashed potatoes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orange juice</td>
<td></td>
<td>Green beans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nonfat milk</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dinner roll</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Canned pears</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nonfat milk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 4</td>
<td>Ready-to-eat cereal</td>
<td>Tomato juice</td>
<td>Spicy Baked Fish*</td>
<td>Graham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whole-wheat English</td>
<td>Egg Salad Sandwich*</td>
<td>Peas and carrots</td>
<td>cracker with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English muffin</td>
<td>Raw veggies with dip</td>
<td>Wild rice blend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orange slices</td>
<td>Nonfat milk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nonfat milk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 5</td>
<td>Pancakes with</td>
<td>Tacos*</td>
<td>Cheeseburger Loaf*</td>
<td>Celery and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“lite” syrup</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>carrot sticks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orange juice</td>
<td>Refried beans (canned)</td>
<td></td>
<td>with low-fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nonfat milk</td>
<td>Apple slices with cinnamon</td>
<td></td>
<td>ranch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nonfat milk</td>
<td></td>
<td>dressing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 6</td>
<td>Ready-to-eat cereal</td>
<td>Bean soup (canned)</td>
<td>Homemade Pizza*</td>
<td>Fruitsicle*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whole-wheat toast</td>
<td>Meatloaf sandwich (planned-over)</td>
<td>Carrot sticks</td>
<td>(orange)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Banana</td>
<td>Coleslaw* (planned-over)</td>
<td>Canned pears</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nonfat milk</td>
<td>Nonfat milk</td>
<td>Nonfat milk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 7</td>
<td>Oatmeal with raisins</td>
<td>Pizza (planned-over)</td>
<td>Beef and Cabbage Casserole*</td>
<td>Sugar and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whole-wheat toast</td>
<td>Tossed salad</td>
<td></td>
<td>Spice Snack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orange slices</td>
<td>Apple slices</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mix*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nonfat milk</td>
<td>Nonfat milk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Menus adapted from publications by Cynthia Gardner, former NDSU Student Dietitian, and Suzanne Fundingsland, former Nutrition Specialist, NDSU
**Master Mix**

- 9 c. flour
- ½ c. baking powder
- 1 Tbsp. salt
- 2 tsp. cream of tartar
- 4 Tbsp. sugar
- 1 c. nonfat dry milk powder
- 1 c. vegetable oil

Measure flour, baking powder, salt, cream of tartar, sugar and dry milk into mixing bowl. Stir with a spoon to mix well. Measure and add oil. Blend the oil into the dry mix using the pastry blender, the fork or the knives. The mix should look like coarse cornmeal. Store the mix in covered plastic or glass storage containers in the refrigerator.

To use the Master Mix in a recipe, stir the mix in the container, then spoon it carefully into a cup and level it off with a knife.

**Makes 11 cups.** Use in recipes similar to commercial baking mix.

Ask your local Extension Service office for more recipes featuring “Master Mix.”

---

**Spicy Baked Fish**

- 1 lb. frozen cod fillets, without skin
- ¼ c. chopped onion
- ¼ c. chopped green pepper
- 1 c. (8-oz. can) chopped tomatoes
- ½ tsp. pepper
- ½ tsp. oregano
- 1 c. grated cheese, if you like

Thaw frozen fish in the refrigerator. Cut fish into six servings. Oil baking dish and spread fish in dish. Bake fish in 350-degree oven for 20 minutes. While fish is baking, chop the onion and green pepper in a small pan in a little water for three minutes. Add tomatoes and spices. Cook on stovetop for 10 minutes to blend flavors. When fish is done, pour liquid off. Pour vegetable sauce over fish. Bake 10 minutes. Grate cheese and put over fish. Bake two or three minutes to melt cheese.

**Serves six.** Per serving: 150 calories, 7 g fat, 18 g protein, 3 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber and 250 mg sodium.

---

**Quick Skillet Hot Dish**

- 1 lb. ground turkey or beef
- 1 (5 oz.) package macaroni
- 1 (1 oz.) package dried onion soup mix
- 1 (15 oz.) can kidney beans
- 1 (15 oz.) can corn
- 1 (10½ oz.) can tomato soup or 1 (8 oz.) can tomato sauce plus 1 can water
- 2 c. water

Brown ground turkey or beef in a frying pan. Drain fat. Add the other ingredients, plus 2 cups water. Cook at a low heat for 10 minutes or until the macaroni is cooked and all the liquid is gone.

**Serves six.** Per serving: 360 calories, 7 g fat, 26 g protein, 4 g carbohydrate, 6 g fiber and 790 mg sodium.

Developed by the dietetic students at the College of St. Benedict and St. John’s University, Minnesota.

---

**Yogurt Fruit Crunch**

- 2 c. low-fat yogurt (plain or vanilla)
- 1 c. fruit, fresh (1 banana) or canned in light syrup (drained)
- 1 c. dry cereal, crunchy

Drain fruit if using canned fruit or cut up the fresh fruit. Mix the yogurt and fruit together in a mixing bowl. Spoon the mixture into small serving dishes. Sprinkle ¼ cup cereal on top of each serving.

**Serves four.** Per serving: 170 calories, 1.5 g fat, 5 g protein, 33 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber and 135 mg sodium.

---

**Equipment you will need**

- cutting board
- measuring cup
- sharp knife
- measuring spoons
- baking dish
- tongs or fork
- plastic bag
- can opener
- cooking spoon
- storage containers
Homemade Pizza

Nonstick cooking spray or vegetable oil
½ lb. ground beef
1 tsp. oregano
2 c. Master Mix**
½ c. low-fat milk
flour
1 (10 oz.) can pizza sauce
1 c. chopped vegetables of choice, pepper, onion, tomatoes
1 can (8 oz.) mushrooms, drained
½ c. grated mozzarella cheese

Heat oven to 450 degrees. Spray with nonstick cooking spray or lightly oil cookie sheet. Brown the ground beef in the frying pan and drain the fat. Add oregano and mix well. Let sit. Measure Master Mix and milk into a bowl. Mix lightly to make a dough. Spread flour on the counter. Dump dough onto flour and knead six times. Pat half of dough to fit size of cookie or pizza pan. Move dough to lightly oiled cookie sheet. Pinch the edges of the dough to make a rim. Spread pizza sauce on the dough. Cover with half the ground beef, assorted toppings and grated cheese. Bake at 450 degrees for 15 or 20 minutes. Repeat with second half of dough.

Serves eight. Per serving: 230 calories, 8 g fat, 12 g protein, 26 g carbohydrate, 0 g fiber and 630 mg sodium.

Egg Salad Sandwich

4 hard-cooked eggs
1 stalk celery, chopped
¼ c. mayonnaise*
8 slices whole-wheat bread
tomato slices and lettuce leaves, if desired

Put eggs in pan. Cover with cold water. Put pan on the stove and heat until the water starts to boil. Take pan of eggs off the stove, cover the pan and let it stand for 15 minutes. Wash and chop the celery and put in small bowl. When eggs have stood for 15 minutes, pour cold water over them. Take out of water and peel the eggs. Cut eggs on cutting board and put in bowl. Measure and add mayonnaise and mix well. Place four slices of bread on cutting board. Put one-quarter of egg mix on each slice. Spread egg mix over bread, top with tomato slices and lettuce, and put another slice of bread on top. Cut sandwiches in half and serve.

Serves four. Per serving: 220 calories, 7 g fat, 12 g protein, 30 g carbohydrate, 0 g fiber and 390 mg sodium.
Chili
½ c. chopped onion
½ lb. ground beef
2 tsp. chili powder
pepper
1 can (16 oz. or 2 c.) tomatoes, plain or stewed
1 can (8 oz. or 1 c.) tomato sauce
1 can (15 oz. or 2 c.) kidney beans, undrained

Chop the onion. Brown the ground beef and onion in a large frying pan. Pour off the fat. Drain other can of beans. Mix well. Serve with salsa.

Serves four. Per serving: 230 calories, 3.5 g fat, 20 g protein, 30 g carbohydrate, 8 g fiber and 54 g sodium.

** ** **

Cheeseburger Loaf
1 egg
½ c. low-fat milk
2 slices bread, torn into small pieces
1 stalk chopped celery
¼ c. finely chopped onion
1 tsp. prepared mustard
2 tsp. sugar
2 tsp. vinegar
¾ c. mayonnaise
(use part yogurt to cut calories)
½ tsp. salt
pepper

Beat egg in mixing bowl. Add milk and bread pieces and let soak a few minutes. Chop onion and grate cheese. Add to mixing bowl. Shape into a loaf and put in baking dish. Bake at 350 degrees for one hour.

Serves seven. Per serving: 160 calories, 8 g fat, 15 g protein, 5 g carbohydrate, 0 g fiber and 180 mg sodium.

Quick tip: Buying a block of cheese and grating your own can save you money. Compare the unit prices of block cheese and grated cheese.

** ** **

Potato Salad
4 medium potatoes
2 hard-cooked eggs
1 stalk chopped celery
¼ c. mayonnaise
1 tsp. prepared mustard
2 tsp. sugar
2 tsp. vinegar
¾ c. mayonnaise
(use part yogurt to cut calories)
½ tsp. salt
pepper

Wash, scrub and peel potatoes. Cut into ½-inch cubes. Put potatoes in covered pan in 1 inch of water and cover with 1 inch of cold water. Bring to a boil on the stove, remove from the burner and let sit for 10 minutes. Mix all the other ingredients together in a mixing bowl. When eggs are cooked, peel and cut them. Drain potatoes. Add eggs and potatoes to everything in the mixing bowl. Mix well. Refrigerate two hours or overnight to let flavors blend.

Serves four. Per serving: 360 calories, 3 g fat, 11 g protein, 74 g carbohydrate, 7 g fiber and 740 mg sodium.

** ** **

Fruitsicles
Fruit juice of your choice
(½ c. for each fruitsicle)
— use apple, orange, or grape

Pour juice into the paper cups. Add a Popsicle stick or plastic spoon. The stick can be at an angle. Put filled cups in freezer to freeze juice. Tear off paper cup when you are ready to eat the fruitsicle.

Per fruitsicle: 60 calories, 0 g fat, 0 g protein, 15 g carbohydrate, 0 g fiber and 0 mg sodium.
A “Grocery List” of cost-savings ideas

Check the following if you use the tip or plan to use it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Currently use</th>
<th>Plan to use</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Spend about 30 minutes planning your weekly menus.** Use the sale ads and write a shopping list. Keep the list in a handy spot.

**Avoid shopping when you’re hungry or tired.** Almost everything looks tasty when you’re hungry. If you’re tired, you may be likely to grab convenience foods, which cost more and often are less nutritious.

**Avoid using a credit card for food purchases unless you intend to pay off the balance each month.** You may end up adding credit card interest rates onto the food cost.

**Shop in one or two stores. Consider your gas, too.** If you drive to several stores for special deals, it may not be a “deal.”

**Be familiar with the store layout.** Only go down the aisles that include items on your list.

**For quick shopping trips, shop the perimeter of the store.** Most staples, such as milk, fresh produce and bread, are around the perimeter.

**Compare store brands with national brands and choose the one with the lower price.** Most store brands are similar in quality to name brands, but lower in price.

**Clip coupons, but only for the things you need.** Some stores double the value of coupons to a certain point.

**Compare price using “unit prices.”** The unit pricing on the front edge of shelving helps you know quickly whether the regular-priced super-sized package is a better deal than the sale-priced regular-sized package.

**Check your receipt and change.** Although mistakes are not intentional, they can happen. Look carefully at your receipt to be sure you received the sale price.

---

**My Goal**

[My Goal]

[Date]