

meal planning tips

Crohn's disease & ulcerative colitis

Meal planning can be one of the easiest ways to get healthier meals on the table. With the investment of a small amount of time up front, you can reap the rewards of better nutrition, less food waste, and more money in your wallet.

Get Inspired

It's hard to sit down and create a meal plan without any ideas. Over the course of the week take a few moments to browse online for recipes, crack a few cookbooks, or call a friend for that great recipe she prepared the last time you came over. Specifically seek out blogs or cookbooks dedicated to IBD-friendly recipes.

Get Organized

Have a dedicated place where you store favorite recipes, past meal plans and recipes you wish to try. It could be a spot in your home, in your phone, or on a website (ex: Pinterest). Having all of these items at your fingertips makes meal planning much easier.

Check Schedules

Look at the calendar to determine which nights may work best for home cooked dinners and which nights might be better for something a little quicker. Does someone have soccer practice, a late work meeting, or a dentist appointment? Take those items into consideration when creating your meal plan.

Choose Themes

Creating a meal plan may be a lot less daunting if themes are assigned to different days of week. Themes could include soup, sandwiches, fish, pasta, meatless, slow cooker, poultry, breakfast for dinner, etc.

Peek at the Weather

This may sound crazy, but check the weather when creating your meal plan. If it's supposed to be unseasonably warm, plan to grill or choose foods that may taste better in warmer weather. On the flip side, if the mercury is dropping, choose foods that taste good in colder weather, like soups or hearty pasta dishes.

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Plan for Leftovers

When making your meal plan, plan to have leftovers. They can be reheated for lunches or a quick dinner later in the week.

Stock the Pantry

Meal planning can be easier if the pantry is stocked with essentials. There's nothing worse than starting to cook a meal and realizing you're out of a pantry staple! When a pantry item runs out, make sure to add it your grocery list. Check out the Foods to Stock Your Pantry handout as well.

Be Flexible

No matter how well you plan, there are times when something unexpected may come up. Build some flexibility into your meal plan. Have a day that you know will be for leftovers or a "clean out the fridge" night. Having some built-in flexibility will cause less stress and less food waste!

Shop the Sales

Check the weekly ads to determine if any of your favorite food products are on sale. Incorporate those items into your meal plan. Eating foods that are in season may also help to reduce costs as well.

Keep a Meal Journal

When you're tired, or feeling at a loss for what to include in your meal plan, check out the items you've made in the past for some tried and true inspiration.