

prep ahead cooking tips

Crohn's disease & ulcerative colitis

Eating wisely is an important part of managing Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. However, cooking or preparing a meal may seem overwhelming when energy levels are low or when you're not feeling well. Below are ideas for preparing food to fit in with your lifestyle and nourish your body to feel it's best.

Plan Ahead

Organize meal ideas, recipes, and coupons into one central location for easier, healthy meal planning. Save past grocery lists and meal plans to further simplify meal planning.

Order Online

Many grocery stores and web-based retailers have the capabilities for online grocery shopping. Save time and energy by ordering online and having groceries delivered to your home or using a pick-up service at your local grocery store.

Prep on Shopping Day

When you come home with groceries, prepare what you can ahead of time. Recruit family or a friend to help you cook grains, trim meat, or pack snacks. Package prepped food in clear containers, so you can easily see the contents and place meal items together in the refrigerator. Another plus, fewer messes throughout the week!

Choose Low-Effort Cooking Methods

Use kitchen tools such as a slow cooker, Instant Pot®, steamer, or a microwave to help minimize the burden of cooking.

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Cook in the Morning

It may sound crazy, but if your schedule allows, cook in the morning when you may have more energy. Some foods, like pasta, rice, or baked potatoes, can easily be made in the morning while doing other morning activities (packing lunches, feeding the dog, eating breakfast, etc.).

Seek Healthy Convenience Foods at the Grocery Store

Grocery stores are catering more and more to the convenience needs of their customers. Look for items like pre-chopped, fluoride-friendly fruits and vegetables (melon, asparagus, summer squash), steamable side dishes, shredded rotisserie chicken, quick cooking pastas and grains, or easy to prepare, individually packaged frozen fish fillets. Keep your eyes open because there are always new products arriving on grocery store shelves.

Invest in Time Saving Tools

It's hard to save time prepping ahead if you're not using the right tools. Making an investment in a few basic tools will help you get the job done faster. Some key tools include a sharp kitchen knife, a good vegetable peeler, flexible plastic cutting boards, sturdy tongs, and a non-stick skillet. If you're really wanting to save time, include a food processor or stick blender in your arsenal of kitchen tools.

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Cook Once, Eat Twice

Make meals do double duty. Cook larger batches of what you're already planning on making and freeze half or portion out for lunches during the week. For example, cook several chicken breasts in the slow cooker, shred and use for a variety of meals, like chicken sandwiches, chicken salad, or chicken and rice soup.

Try Deliverable Meal Kits

If you want to take the guesswork out of dinner, try a meal kit delivery service. There are several options available, including some that specifically cater to those with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.
