

prep ahead cooking tips

HIV

The pain and fatigue that comes with HIV can make it difficult to get healthy meals on the table. Below are some tips for making meal times a little easier.

Plan Ahead

Having a plan in place is the best way to stay organized. Make a weekly meal plan with enough flexibility for leftovers or dinners out. From the meal plan, create a grocery list. Sticking to the list will not only keep your health on track, but also benefit your budget as well.

Prep on a Good Day

On a day when energy levels are high and pain is low, try to prepare meal items. Chop vegetables, cook grains, prepare meats or cook whole meals to freeze for later use. Ask a family member or friend to help. Extra hands make for easier cooking, plus it's more fun!

Choose Low-Effort Cooking Methods

Slow cookers, Instant Pots®, steamers, and microwaves all provide easy, low-energy ways to cook. When you're not feeling your best, try using one of these tools to get a healthy meal on the table without a lot of effort.

Prep in the Morning

While doing morning activities (drinking coffee, feeding the dog, packing lunches, etc.) try to prepare a no-fuss food item for dinner that night. Cook grains, steam vegetables, or bake a protein. It doesn't add much more work and saves time and energy in the evening when you may be more tired.

Look for Healthy Convenience Foods in the Grocery Store

Look for items like pre-chopped fruits and vegetables, quick-cooking grains, canned beans or lentils, steamable side dishes, shredded rotisserie chicken, bagged salads, fresh herbs in tubes, or individually packaged, quick-cooking frozen fish fillets.

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Invest in Time-Saving Tools

It's hard to save time prepping ahead if you're not using the right tools. If you can, make the investment in two basic tools to help you get the job done faster: a sharp knife and a non-slip cutting board. Other useful kitchen tools include a vegetable peeler, metal egg slicer, garlic press, and food processor.

Grocery Store Dinner

If you don't have the energy to make dinner, pop into your local grocery store and purchase a rotisserie chicken, a bagged salad, and a loaf of whole grain bread. Dinner can be on the table in a snap.

Check Out Delivery Services

Several grocery stores now offer grocery delivery services. Having groceries delivered may leave you with more energy and time to prepare meals. Meal kit services are also an option to lessen the load and take the guess work out of preparing wholesome and nutritious dishes.
