

# Tips for Busy Families



## Plan Your Meals

- ♥ Plan weekly meals based on your family's schedule.

## Use a Shopping List

- ♥ Save money and time by making only one trip to the store. Make and use a shopping list.



## Share Meal Preparation Tasks

- ♥ Teach your family how to shop for groceries.
- ♥ Include your spouse and children in preparing meals and cleaning up.
- ♥ Clean up as you cook—you will have less to clean up after you finish cooking.
- ♥ Share cooking duties with other family members or neighbors. For example, your family can cook enough food to share with another family.

## Cook in Advance

- ♥ Prepare some foods in advance (such as spaghetti sauce). Use these foods for quick meals. You can add chicken or beef to the sauce and serve it over spaghetti or rice.
- ♥ Prepare parts of a meal the night before (for example, marinate chicken in the refrigerator overnight).
- ♥ Pack your lunch the night before.
- ♥ Cut and wash vegetables, and make enough salad for 2 days. Do not add dressing until serving time.
- ♥ Cook two or three dishes on your day off, and freeze some of them. Use the frozen dishes on the days when you don't have time to cook.
- ♥ Prepare for recipes the night before by cutting and trimming meats.
- ♥ Prepare meals in a slow cooker.

## Cook Simply

- ♥ Steam vegetables, and serve them without sauces.
- ♥ Use frozen vegetables without sauces.
- ♥ Broil, grill, bake, or roast meats.
- ♥ Make one-pot meals, such as stews and casseroles.
- ♥ Use frozen chopped vegetables (such as carrots, peas, and broccoli).
- ♥ Use the microwave for cooking or defrosting.
- ♥ Learn simple recipes that can be made in less than 30 minutes.

## Use Herbs and Spices

- ♥ Chop fresh herbs and place in ice cube trays. Fill trays with water and freeze. Store the frozen cubes in a plastic bag in the freezer. Use when you need fresh herbs.
- ♥ Grow cilantro, basil, or thyme on a sunny windowsill.
- ♥ Keep dried herbs on hand. One teaspoon of dried herbs is equal to 3 teaspoons of fresh herbs.

## Keep Quick Snacks on Hand

- ♥ Try these healthy snacks:
  - Fresh fruits and vegetables
  - Whole-grain, ready-to-eat, dry cereal
  - Fat-free and low-fat yogurt
  - Fat-free and low-fat cheese
  - Baked corn tortilla chips
  - Whole-grain breads

