

WHAT'S FOR DINNER??

It's 4:00 in the afternoon.
Do you know what you are having for dinner?
Most of us do not have a plan.
It does help to plan ahead.
You will save money and time!



♥ **Save Money!** Not having a plan for dinner can be costly. You may be tempted to go out to eat. Eating at a restaurant once a week (\$25 for a family) can cost \$1300 a year. Eating out twice a week can cost \$2600 a year. There are probably many things you could do with that money!

♥ **Save Time!** Eating at a restaurant can take a lot of time. You could spend up to 2 hours when driving to a restaurant, ordering food, waiting for the food to cook and then eating the food.

Make a Plan

List the week's activities for family members.
Plan meals that fit your family's life.

♥ **Weekend dishes.** There are some dishes that can be made on the weekend, frozen and eaten later in the week. Meatloaf, casseroles and soups can be frozen for quick meals that only need to be heated.

♥ **Planned leftover dishes.** There are some foods that can be eaten 2 nights in a row. They help save cooking time! Leftover chicken stir fry can be heated and served on baked potatoes or noodles.

♥ **One dish meals.** Casseroles can be stirred together in the morning, refrigerated during the day and heated in the oven while you are helping children with homework or playing outside.

♥ **Pantry dishes.** Always keep foods in your cupboard for quick meals – spaghetti with sauce, macaroni and cheese, tuna fish or peanut butter sandwiches, and canned soups.

Keep your family's favorite foods in your cupboard and freezer, ready for quick and easy meals:

Frozen chicken breasts
Frozen hamburger patties
Canned tuna fish
Peanut butter

Shredded cheese
Tortillas
Whole wheat bread

Fresh Potatoes
Fresh Carrots
Spaghetti sauce
Noodles
Macaroni and cheese
Boxed rice dishes
Canned soups
Canned beans

Canned fruits and vegetables
Frozen vegetables



It is okay to not plan every meal as long as you have a back up meal in your cupboard!

Meal Time is Family Time

It may seem impossible to have family meal times.

Some of the common reasons for not eating together are busy work and school schedules, no time to cook and family members are not interested in eating together.



Make family meals a priority
in your home.

Take time to eat with your family.

Here are some ways to get your family to the table:

👍 **Keep it simple!** Meals do not need to be fancy. You want to spend time with your family, not cooking a large meal.

👍 **Start slowly!** If your family is not used to eating together, start by planning 1 to 2 family meals in a week.

👍 **Ignore family protests.** If someone in your family does not want to take the time to eat together, insist that they eat with the family. They will be glad later.

👍 **Ask everyone to help prepare the meals.** Cooking will be quick, and children like to eat what they help to cook.

👍 **Let your family cook!** Have special nights where family members can plan and cook a meal. Even young children can plan and prepare a meal with your help. Ask your young child what he would like to plan for dinner. Help him cook the meal.

👍 **Start family meals when your children are young.**

It will become a habit for them. Family meals will make those later teenage years easier. Your teenager will be used to eating together and sharing their life stories.

👍 **Create special family meal times.** Make homemade pizza, grilled hamburgers or special family casseroles.

Your family will remember
these special family meal times!



Have plenty of your favorite canned and frozen vegetables in your cupboard or freezer.

Serve
a vegetable
with
every meal!



What can you do?

- Eat most meals together with my family.
- Keep some foods in my cupboard for quick meals.
- Plan meals for most of the week and make a shopping list.
- Other: _____