



Meal Planning and Shopping for Diabetes

Meal planning can save you time and money. Without planning, you are more likely to eat expensive convenience or restaurant foods that are high in fat, sugar and sodium.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Build menus around foods you already have. If your favorite recipes are not very nutritious, change them to cut the fat, sodium and sugar. Try one new recipe per week. Look for recipes with a few simple ingredients.

Consider how the meals will look. Choose foods that are different in color, texture, flavor, shape, size and temperature. If you serve a meal that is all one color or all one texture, it will be less appetizing.

Look for grocery store specials in the newspaper. Buy what is in season so you can save money. Coupons are only good if they are for products you normally buy or that fit into your meal plan. Often coupons are for expensive national brands. A store brand or a fresh product may be a better buy.

Make a shopping list to control impulse buying. You will stick to your budget better and not forget the ingredients you need. If you use coupons, write your list on an envelope and put the coupons in it. Only buy things not on the list when they are truly a bargain.

Shop only once a week when you are not hungry. The more you go to the store, the more food you will buy. Shop alone if family members push you to buy things you do not need. Don't shop on Saturday when all the free food samples are offered.

Go to stores you know. Group the food on your shopping list according to store departments. You will shop more quickly. The longer you stay in a store the more you will buy.

Plan meals for the whole family. The diabetic meal plan is what everyone should eat. It is well-balanced and nutritious. Few special foods will be needed. The only extra food you may want are sugar-free drinks, artificial sweeteners and low fat salad dressings and margarine.

THE VALUE OF NUTRITION LABELS



Read labels of foods you regularly use at home. If they do not meet your nutrition goals, look for better choices. Don't read all the labels at once. Focus on one or two foods each week. In a short time, you will have a whole new diet.

Most people read the label for a few nutrients that are important to them. If you have diabetes, total fat and total carbohydrate may be most important. If you have high blood pressure, you may need to look at the sodium content. If you are trying to lose weight, calories become important.

The Daily Value (% DV) on the label can tell you how each food fits in the total diet. If the Daily Value is less than 5%, the food is a poor source of that nutrient. If it is 10-19%, it is a good source of the nutrient. If it is 20% or more, it is an excellent source of the nutrient. For some nutrients like sodium and cholesterol, keep your total intake below the Daily Value if possible. For others like calcium, get the Daily Value or more.

At first diabetic meal planning will take time. Your dietitian and Extension agent can help. But with practice, it gets easier. Soon both you and your budget will be healthier.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. Can I plan one week's menus and a shopping list?
2. What two food labels this week will I read at home so I can make better choices at the store?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____

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