

Learn to Cook

Research shows that eating out frequently parallels the probability of being overweight. The ability of being able to cook is very important in having a healthy lifestyle. You can learn this skill by watching cooking shows, reading cookbooks, and taking cooking classes. The best way to improve your ability to cook is to learn how to cook a few things really well. Once you feel that you have mastered these, then start to expand with other foods. Try to find fast, simple, nutritious recipes to make life easier.

Cooking at home verses eating out can also save money. If you eat out 5 times per week for dinner and you change that to just once per week, you could save \$100 per week. This of course depends on what and where you eat. If you spent \$80 a week for one year you would be spending \$4,160 per year in restaurants. That could be a lot of groceries and you could be getting better nutrition.

By learning to cook at home you are more likely to:

- be healthier
- save money
- reduce calories in areas that are not needed

By learning a little about making your meals healthier you also:

- learn that small changes can make a big difference in your health
- understand proper portions in order to control weight
- have added energy, feel better and are happier

Do not forget the meals that you do not have to cook. These can still be healthy and balanced with a little thought. For example you could have a turkey wrap with Swiss cheese on a whole wheat tortilla, raw carrots and red pepper strips, and an apple. This is a good, well-balanced meal.

As you expand your ability to cook and understand nutrition, then try writing menus that your family will enjoy. This may sound like a daunting task, but it is not difficult. Use the menu below as a starting point. Mark out the things that you do not like or don't know how to cook and write in items that satisfy your taste. This will get you started in the right direction and that is the hard part.

Lunch**Dinner**

	Lunch	Dinner
Mon.	Chicken sandwich on wheat bread, cucumber slices, apple	Meatloaf, mashed potatoes (with skins), yellow squash, roll
Tues.	Meatloaf sandwich, carrot sticks, grapes	Navy beans with ham, corn bread, sliced tomato and onions
Wed.	Grilled cheese sandwich, celery, blueberries and strawberries	Roasted chicken, baked sweet potato, cauliflower, roll
Thur.	Chicken salad with toast, mango	Poached salmon with dill sauce, wild rice, asparagus, pear
Fri.	Fresh fruit plate with cottage cheese	Beef stew, sliced cucumbers, roll
Sat.	Beef stew (left over), diced tomato	Chicken quesadillas with sour cream salsa, refried beans, tomato/onion/avocado salad
Sun.	Egg sandwich, yogurt with fresh fruit	Pork loin roast, oven roasted potatoes, zucchini, roll, blueberry cobbler

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