



A Nutrition Resource

# MEAL PLANNING

## CREATE A LIST OF FOODS YOU AND YOUR FAMILY LIKE TO EAT

- Consider your family's budget and food preferences.
- Keep the list in a convenient place such as your kitchen.
- Over time, continue to add new recipes or foods you and your family like.

*Don't forget to **involve your family** in the planning and cooking process to make it a fun activity for everyone!*

## PLAN FOR THE AMOUNT AND TYPES OF MEALS AND SNACKS NEEDED UNTIL YOUR NEXT GROCERY TRIP

- How many meals and snacks do you and your family members prefer each day?
- How many meals or snacks will you be eating at home, eating on the go, or eating out? Plan for on-the-go snacks such as whole fruit and nuts if needed.
- How many servings do you want for each meal or snack? How many leftover or freezer meals do you want?

*Eating **home-prepared meals** instead of take-out or dine-in restaurant meals can help you save a lot of money every month!*

## TAKE NOTE OF WHAT IS ALREADY AVAILABLE

- What items do you already have in your refrigerator, freezer, and pantry that you can use? Dried pasta for a noodle dish? Salad dressing for a veggie salad?
- If you have foods that need to be eaten soon before spoiling, plan to use those items first.
- Look for sale or discounted items through store flyers or websites.

## MAKE A MENU

- It can be for a 1, 2, or 4-week cycle.
- Plan for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks.
- Keep it balanced and incorporate the 5 MyPlate food groups each day.
- Ensure there is variety over time and keep it simple.

## MAKE A SHOPPING LIST

- Write down the ingredients you need and the quantities.
- Keep a list of items you regularly purchase in a convenient place so that you have a starting point each time you make your list.
- Check out our Saving Money on Groceries resource to learn how to save money when grocery shopping.



## Vegetable Barley Soup

Yield: 8 Servings | Serving Size: 1 Cup

- 1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup chopped carrot
- 1/2 cup chopped celery
- 1/2 cup uncooked pearl barley
- 1 (14.5 ounce) can diced tomatoes
- 1 (15 ounce can) white northern or pinto bean, rinsed and drained
- 6 cups water
- 2 cubes or teaspoons vegetable or chicken bouillon
- 1 bay leaf (optional)
- 2 cups chopped cabbage
- Salt & Pepper to taste

- 1) In a 3-quart pot, cook vegetable oil, carrots, onion and celery over medium heat, stirring often, until onion has softened.
- 2) Add barley and stir. Add tomatoes, drained beans, water and bouillon. Add bay leaf (if using).
- 3) Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low to simmer. Cover pot and gently cook soup for about 1 hour or until barley is soft.
- 4) Add chopped cabbage and season to taste with salt and pepper.
- 5) Let cook for 5 to 10 minutes to wilt cabbage. Remove bay leaf before serving. Serve hot.

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size	1 cup (353g)
Amount per serving	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>160</b>
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 2.5g	3%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 330mg	14%
Total Carbohydrate 28g	10%
Dietary Fiber 7g	25%
Total Sugars 4g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 7g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 78mg	6%
Iron 2mg	10%
Potassium 464mg	10%
<small>*The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.</small>	

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This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact the Montana Public Assistance Helpline at 1-888-706-1535 or [www.apply.mt.gov](http://www.apply.mt.gov). Montana State University Extension is an ADA/EO/AA/Veteran's Preference Employer and Provider of Educational Outreach.