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Your Nutrition Navigator

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## Menu Planning Guide

### Tips for Menu Planning

- Set aside time to plan. Write down your menus for one to two weeks.
- Develop a system for menu planning and grocery shopping. Good planning eliminates frequent trips to the grocery store – saves time and money!
- Purchase and use low-fat cookbooks or modify favorite recipes to reduce fat and increase fiber (refer to Recipe Modification handout).
- Keep it simple.
- Coordinate menus with your family's activity schedule.
- Utilize your crockpot, wok, electric skillet, steamer, and bread machine.
- Cook once for two or more meals.
- Include the following foods:

Food Group	Foods to Include Daily	Foods to Include Weekly
<b>Starch or Complex CHO</b>	Whole grain breads, cereals, and/or pasta	Oat products, rye products, flaxseed products, wheat bran, psyllium-containing breads and cereals
<b>Vegetables</b>	Dark, green leafy vegetables	Orange vegetables, celery, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, cabbage, onions, garlic, tomatoes
<b>Fruits</b>	Citrus fruit: oranges, orange juice, grapefruit juice	Any type of berries, apples, apricots, bananas, grapes or grape juice
<b>Dairy</b>	Milk, yogurt, or low-fat cheese	Milk, yogurt, or low-fat cheese
<b>Protein</b>	Lean or low-fat meats, poultry, or fish, OR complementary vegetable proteins: Legumes + grains, cereals or pasta; nuts + grains; dairy + grains, cereals, pasta	Legumes/dried beans, soybeans or soy foods, fish: tuna, salmon, mackerel, sardines, or other types of fish, walnuts

## **Grocery Shopping Strategies:**

- **Plan ahead:** outline your weekly menu and make your grocery list from your outline. Shop from your list!
- Never shop when you are hungry!
- Have a mental map of your store, so you can go directly to the products you need.
- Resist temptation and walk past tempting food displays and food samples.
- If you must venture down a “fat” aisle to get an item, leave your cart at the end of the aisle so you cannot fill up with other items.
- Caution: items at eye level are often high-fat and high-profit that are placed there to encourage you to impulse buy.
- Shop the perimeter of the store. The outside aisles contain the healthiest items, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, breads, meats, and dairy products.
- Do not buy high-fat treats “for the kids.” More than likely they’ll end up in your mouth too! More importantly, your children do not need the extra fat in their diets.
- Keep costs down. Good nutrition should not be expensive.

## **Summary: Reading and Evaluating Food Labels**

- Read the **list of ingredients**.
- Look at the **serving size**.
- **How many servings** are in the package?
- How many **calories** are in a serving?
- How many **grams of fat** are in a serving?
- What is the **percentage of fat** in a serving size?
- Evaluate the **type of fats** in the food.
- Is it a good source of **fiber**?
- Is it high in simple carbohydrates or sugars?
- Is it high in **sodium**?