



Nutrition and Your Health

Healthy Meals: Cooking For One or Two

Read on to find out how you can plan healthy meals for one or two, reduce wasted food and add variety to your meals.

Plan Ahead

- Planning meals ahead is important when trying to keep food waste at a minimum while trying to have variety in your diet.
- Try to plan meals for the week so that trips to the grocery store are limited. Use the grocery store fliers to check for sale items. Don't shop when you are hungry.
- Keep a variety of staples on hand.
- Build the meal around the entrée; add breads/pastas/starches, vegetables, fruit.
- Make a grocery list and buy only what you need.
- Ask the butcher to repackage larger portions of meat into smaller portions if buying single portions from the meat case is not an option.
- Cut larger portions of meat or poultry into smaller portions. For example, a beef steak can be cut in two. Cook half for dinner and cut the other half into strips or cubes, freeze and add later to a soup or stew.
- Shop with a friend and split the perishable foods into amounts you both can use.
- Plan for leftovers, so that all you have to do is re-heat and eat. Be sure to divide leftovers into smaller portions before storing.
- Reduce your favorite recipes or check the local library for cookbooks designed for cooking for just one or two. A few examples include: Betty Crocker's Cooking for Two; EatingWell Serves Two: 150 Healthy in A Hurry Suppers; Serves One: Simple Meals to Savor When You're on Your Own by Toni Lydecker; Healthy Cooking for Two (or Just You) by Frances Price, RD. Also check recipe web sites.

Balance Your Meals

- Use MyPyramid as a guide for making daily food choices and planning balanced meals. If you have computer and internet access, go to www.mypyramid.gov to learn more.
- If you don't have access to the internet, keep these important messages in mind: Make half of your grains whole; Vary your vegetables; Focus on fruit; Know your fats; eat calcium-rich foods; Go lean with protein; find your balance between food and physical activity.
- Choose healthy cooking methods such as baking, broiling, steaming and stir-frying. Use cooking spray instead of shortening or oil.

Store Food Safely

- Make sure you have thick plastic bags or shallow storage containers on hand.
- Always label and date foods that you put in the refrigerator or the freezer.
- Leftovers should be refrigerated or frozen within 2 hours.
- Be sure to use leftovers in a timely fashion. Check a food storage chart for proper storage periods.

Enjoy Your Meals

- Create a pleasant atmosphere when eating at home. Listen to relaxing music, choose a pleasant location, or set the table with nice dishes, placemat, flowers or candles.
- Spice up foods with different herbs to try new flavors.
- Try a new recipe once a week.
- Invite a friend to join you.
- Hold weekly potluck dinners with friends or neighbors. Take turns hosting.



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