

Tips for **QUICK MEAL PREPARATION**

MEAL PLANNING

- Plan a week's worth of meals and snacks in advance.
- Choose simple meals with easy preparation frequently.
- Plan a meal each week that freezes well and plan to make double.
- Plan to cook extra in the evening and incorporate leftovers into another meal or lunches.
- Plan some meals with the same fresh ingredients to reduce food waste.
- Plan meals around healthy ready-to-eat items such as rotisserie chicken, marinara pasta sauce, or canned reduced-sodium chili.
- Choose quick-cooking whole grains such as instant brown rice, quinoa, or quick barley
- Make a shopping list and organize by aisle or department.

MEAL PREPARATION

- When you have more time and energy, chop vegetables or ingredients to use later or prepare a casserole a day or two ahead of time.
- Sit at a table to peel or chop items.
- Practice mise en place: Having all items ready to use and in place before you begin cooking will make the cooking less stressful and easier.
- Use time-saving appliances such as a microwave, pressure cooker, slow-cooker, or food processor.
- Purchase items already partially prepared (e.g. chopped onion, frozen fruits and vegetables).
- Ask family members for help in meal preparation.

MEAL CLEANUP

- Line baking pans with foil and use a cooking bag in your slow cooker to minimize cleanup.
- Cooking a double batch and freezing a favorite recipe will also help with cleanup as you will likely just be heating the recipe the second time you enjoy it.
- Load the dishwasher or put dishes in to soak as you are cooking.

QUICK MEAL SUGGESTIONS

- Frozen meal with added veggies or side salad.
- Precooked chicken breast, fresh or frozen veggies, precooked brown rice.
- Build a salad from a salad bar (spinach, veggies, chicken and/or beans, nuts).
- Bowl of whole grain cereal or oatmeal, fruit, nuts, Greek yogurt.
- Eggs scrambled with tomatoes, mushrooms, and spinach, topped with feta cheese, with whole wheat toast and fruit

