



Scale Back Alabama 2017: Health Tip - Week 5

PLAN FOR MEALS

Planning meals ahead of time is the best way to prevent you from consuming unnecessary calories from fast food and vending machines. It is easier to make a healthy choice when a healthy choice is easily accessible. Meal planning can help you save money, get healthy options right at your fingertips, reduce waste and stress, and add variety to your diet. Start small, plan 2-3 days ahead to see how it works for you and your family. Plan for the meals that you will eat at home and for meals on the go. Making a written plan will help you establish the details, make a grocery list, and stay on track. For additional tips to assist you with your planning, click [here](#).

INCLUSION TIP: Planning, preparing and executing a week of healthy dinners can be challenging, but doable! Check out [“5 Meals: 1 Bag”](#) for a series of weekly meals specific for individuals who need less preparation and shopping time. All meals have been designed to be rich in important nutrients, such as protein, which is necessary for maintaining muscle mass, fighting infections and preventing skin breakdown. Ingredients for all five meals should fit in one large reusable grocery bag, allowing for an easier grocery shopping experience.

MYTH: Meal planning and prepping takes too long; I don't have the extra time for that!

FACT: Meal planning and prepping might seem to take a lot of extra time at first, but once you establish a routine it can actually save you time. Taking small steps to plan your meals ahead can save you time at the grocery store as well as saving you trips back and forth. Even if you don't cook your meals ahead, setting aside time to wash and process items early in the week can actually save steps and time when you're trying to get a meal on the table. Try it! Make adjustments to fit your lifestyle.

WEEKLY RECIPE:

[13 Simple Meal Prep Recipes](#)

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE BEHAVIORS TRACKER:

(check when behavior added)

- Set SMART Goal
- Exercise – Be FITT
- “Eat A Rainbow”
- Drink Water
- Plan Your Meals

FAMILY FOCUS

Involve your kids and spouse in the meal planning process. Ask them for input or ideas of foods that they would like to see on the menu. Include them in planning their own lunches and snacks and give them a special “Kid’s Night” each week that they can plan. Teach them about healthy eating as you plan your menus. Give them a color using the “Eat a Rainbow” concept and let them pick the vegetable or fruit for dinner or snack.