

Game Plan

"Coach Reid is here with a dinner game plan. Huddle up and prepare for a nutritional victory!"

[Imagine the screeching sound of a record player needle] - Okay, I'm not Coach Andy Reid, but I consider myself a coach when it comes to meal planning and nutritional choices. And I am a Reid (but no relation to Andy).

What should you make for dinner? Do you feel like the clock is ticking down, the fans (household members) are restless and you have limited resources (time, money, ingredients)? You suggest tacos and someone throws up a block –“*anything but tacos!*”

Just like a team that practices offensive and defensive plays, successful kitchen quarterbacks have a plan. They practice. They fail. They try again.

My dinner game plan starts before I go ingredient shopping. Like a scout checking out the competition, I have to collect information prior to making my menu. I review my calendar to know what nights I need quick options. I review store promotions to see what is on sale or seasonally available. Then, I make a menu for each night featuring a main course. Most are tried and true recipes, but I do try new options on weekends or when I have more time. If I am trying something new, I choose ingredients that appeal to my household's tastes. (Just like a coach designing plays that matches skills of the team).

Although I live in 5 minutes away from a large grocery store, I keep supplies in my pantry and freezer. I can create a quick meal with pantry staples like pasta, sauce, beans, rice and canned soup. These meal starter supplies are my “go-to” plans when I'm limited on time or energy.

Research indicates that people can spend up to 30 minutes or more a day trying to figure out what to eat for dinner. OR, you can spend 30 minutes or less per week if you learn and use the principles of menu planning. It takes practice and discipline. But it will save you time and money. (Consider what you can do with that extra time!)

Start by making a list of household favorites, budget stretches and quick-fix meals. Think about cooking once and eating twice (planned-overs instead of left-overs). Some households have a 2 to 4 week cycle menu. They use the same menus over and over which can make planning and shopping easier.

My favorite tip is to reward the head chef/coach with a day off. Go out and support a local restaurant. It is a way to expose household members to new food items that might be future options for your home team.

The **Dining with Diabetes** course provides participants with opportunities to learn about about label reading, meal planning and trying new foods. New participants are welcome to join the class anytime. If you have more questions, contact K-State Research and Extension Cowley County at 620-221-5450.

Source: Create Better Health, Utah State University Extension, SNAP-Ed

Upcoming K-State Research and Extension Events

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity employer and provider. Call 620-221-5450 for disability accommodations and scholarship requests.

Dining with Diabetes - Thursdays, February 17 & 24 and March 3, Winfield Early Learning Center Cafeteria, 509 E Eighth Avenue, Winfield, 5:15-7:15 p.m., \$7 at door for each session, Call 620-221-5450 to register.

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy - Arkansas City class with Golden Tigers \$20, Sixteen sessions, Mondays and Wednesdays, beginning February 7, 11 a.m. - 12 p.m., 620-441-5225, pre-registration required.

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy - Winfield, Tisdale United Methodist Church gym, starts March 21 (Mondays and Wednesdays, 1-2 p.m. or 2:15-3:15 p.m.) call 620-221-5450, pre-registration required. \$20.

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