

## The Secrets of a Health Kitchen

### Short Cuts for Meal Prepping

- **We need to start viewing cooking as a de-stressor as opposed to a stressor**
  - Get the kids involved. Think of what you want to make and see what roles the kids can have to help out.
    - It has been shown that children are more likely to try a new food if they took part in helping to prepare it.
  - Make meal time a joyful time and a social time.
    - This will help limit the amount of time your family is eating out and increase the amount of time you are eating in the home. The more you eat at home the more you know what is in your food.
- **Take some time and do some menu planning**
  - A great strategy to get you in the mood to do this is to read and flip through cookbooks and cooking magazines.
    - Ask your relatives for family dishes and commit to trying to make them on a regular basis.
  - Make lists to take with you to the grocery store based on the recipes you are going to prepare for the week.
  - Make it a family approach. Have every family member pick a meal for the week.
  - Have a special night of the meal week. Can one night be a meal that is representative of your culture or another culture?
    - The family will look forward to this. This is a great way for children to learn about their culture, spend time with their family and learn to appreciate quality food.
      - And again it becomes the families' form of entertainment.
  - Try having more vegetarian based meals.
  - Use meat in moderation, when sliced, cut up and chopped a little goes a long way.
- **Anytime you have a moment prep food (cook in short bursts)**
  - Chop the onions the night before. Chop extra and just leave them in the fridge for later use.
  - Chop the vegetables that you will use for the dinner before you head to work
  - Soak beans right before you go to bed
  - Grate cheese as soon as you get home before you run the kids to soccer
  - Mix dry ingredients during a commercial break during a TV show



- **Getting the tasks done**

- Prep dough and freeze some of it. Pull some out to have a pizza for a quick meal.
- Cook in bulk and then freeze sauces, soups and quick breads.
- Make sauces such as a teriyaki or peanut one night and use them for meals throughout the next couple of weeks.
- Have a cooking buddy, you make one soup they make another and then you switch
- If you live alone have a work lunch buddy one day they bring the lunch and the next day you bring the lunch for the both of you.
- Freeze in portion sizes
- Can you assign certain jobs to other household members?
- Prepare hard boiled eggs to use in salads or as a part of your lunch to take to work.

- **Jazz up salads enough to make them be the main part of the meal**

- Top it with beans and seeds, grilled vegetables, meat or seafood. Add some dried or fresh fruit.
- Serve it with a nice piece of bread and cheese.

- **Utilize cooking gadgets to your advantage:**

- Rice cookers
- Pressure cookers

- **Desserts as an appropriate part of the meal**

- It is nice to enjoy desserts every once in a while because when people deprive themselves they often tend to binge on a food item at some other time.
  - Prepare cookie dough and roll the dough into balls and freeze the cookie dough. Then every once in a while after dinner, prepare enough cookies for everyone to enjoy one. It is warm and tasty.
  - Dark chocolate is a satisfying and nutritious dessert that takes no time to prepare.

- **If you are leaning to using a convenience meals remember to read the ingredients.**

- Cut out:
  - High fructose corn syrup
  - Aspartame
  - Sucrolose
  - Partially hydrogenated oils
  - Monosodium glutamate
  - BHT
  - Artificial flavors
- Many convenience foods contain a lot of excess sodium and sweetener both which are harmful to your health.