



American Heart Association®

Healthy for Good™

GS4

GROCERY SHOPPING

Weekly Meal Plan Made Easy

Time: 70 Minutes

Discover how you can plan a week of healthy meals even with a tight schedule and budget. We'll also learn how to take advantage of sales and coupons. Meal planning will help you choose fresh, seasonal produce, maintain your pantry and enjoy nutritious meals throughout the week.

OBJECTIVES:

Create a weekly meal plan and grocery list. Each participant will make one for their household.

Describe how to plan ahead and what to do at the grocery store.

SETUP

- Review resource list and print it out. Purchase all necessary supplies
- Place circulars at demo station.
- Provide computer, internet access, and projector, if available.

INTRO (10 Minutes)

- Welcome participants and introduce yourself.
- Take care of any housekeeping items (closest bathroom, water fountain, etc.).
- Give a brief description of the educational experience.
- Engage in a goal-setting activity from the options provided in the Welcome Toolkit provided as part of the instructional materials.

DEMO (10 Minutes)

- Play video(s) or demonstrate content (see demo script).

ACTIVITY (20 Minutes)

- Participants will explore various healthy recipes and create a weekly meal plan and grocery list for their household.

RECAP (10 Minutes)

- Pass out handout(s) and review them together.

GOAL SETTING/CLOSING (20 Minutes)

- Engage in a goal-setting activity from the options provided in the Welcome Toolkit. Pass out the Setting SMART Goals handout to participants.
- Thank participants and encourage them to join the next activity. (Provide date/time/location if known.)



Weekly Meal Plan Made Easy Resource List

HANDOUTS/VIDEOS

Find these resources on AHA's YouTube channel or heart.org/healthyforgood

- ☐ Article – [Eat Healthy on a Budget: Plan Ahead](#)
- ☐ Article – [8 Ways to Focus on Fiber](#)
- ☐ Article – [Benefits & How To's of Family Dinners](#)

Find these resources in this lesson

- ☐ Handout – [Shop Smart and Save](#)
- ☐ Handout – [Sample Grocery List](#)
- ☐ Handout – [Setting SMART Goals](#)

SPACE SETUP

- ☐ Chairs and tables
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Folders
- ☐ Computer, internet access, and projector, if available

ACTIVITY SUPPLIES*

- ☐ Local circulars
- ☐ Calendar for the next week (or a sheet of paper with columns or rows labeled Monday – Sunday)
- ☐ Sheets of lined paper
- ☐ Pens

*Purchase appropriate number of supplies for your participants. Participants can divide into teams and share supplies.

Weekly Meal Plan Made Easy Demo Script



SAY:

Smart shopping on a budget means knowing what to buy and when. Today, you'll learn how to shop smart and save.



The first step is to plan ahead:

As food prices keep rising, shopping for nutritious food on a budget becomes more challenging. The good news is that healthy eating can actually cost less. By creating a food budget, planning menus and shopping wisely, you can save money and enjoy delicious, nutritious meals!



When you're serving a new recipe for the first time:

- Cook once and eat twice. When you're cooking, try doubling the ingredients to make enough for two meals. Use the recipe's suggested serving amount (such as 1 ½ cups per serving) to divide up the finished dish, so family members eat the right number of calories. Freeze what's left from what you've cooked to use for a future meal. What a great way to save time and money and reduce food waste!
- After you serve a new recipe for the first time, note on the recipe how much food was left over, if any.



Plan your meals each week and make sure to keep recipes, grocery lists, receipts and coupons in one place to make planning easier.



Make a shopping list with specific details. Note the quantity needed and which coupons you have. Going to the store without a list often means you're more likely to spend money on impulse buys and waste time wandering.



Know what you have and inventory your pantry each week. You may find it helpful to organize your list the same way that the grocery store is organized. For example, list the fresh produce items together, the frozen items together, etc.



Save receipts. Each week, compare what you've spent to what you budgeted.



Collect coupons. Finding what is on sale for the week can spark ideas about what to cook. Keep grocery store circulars or ads and check the front of your grocery store for coupons. Find some way to note the items you have a coupon for. For example, put a star next to them on your list. Then you won't forget to use your coupons.



Boost your savings:

Sign up for rewards/loyalty programs at your favorite grocery stores. You'll automatically get savings when your card or barcode is scanned at checkout. You'll get emails about specials and deals, too.



Be sure to check out the wide variety of apps that can save you money on groceries. Most of them are free! Each is set up differently, but they're all designed to save you money and time. These apps can:

- Allow you to virtually "clip" coupons and store them in the app
- Turn photos of coupons into scannable barcodes you can use at checkout
- Alert you about price reductions and coupon expiration dates
- Enable you to share coupons with your family and friends
- Compare ingredient pricing by store
- Direct you to the nearest grocery store with the cheapest price for an ingredient
- Create a grocery list from a meal plan or recipe
- Send you cash back when you scan your receipts

Continued on page 4

Weekly Meal Plan Made Easy Demo Script (Continued)



SAY:

While you're at the store:

- Compare prices. Store-brand products may be more affordable.
- Use coupons, but compare prices and nutrition facts. A coupon may not always be the best deal or the healthiest option.
- Buy in bulk. You may save money. Just be sure you have room in your pantry or freezer.
- Buy produce that's in season. Fresh fruits and vegetables will last for about a week. Remember, though, that canned or frozen fruits and vegetables will last longer, may be less expensive and can be just as healthy.
- Don't check out at the checkout! Pay attention at the register to make sure you get all your discounts and savings.

Weekly Meal Plan Made Easy Activity Script

Pass out a calendar for the next week (or a sheet of paper with columns or rows labeled Monday-Sunday), pens and sheets of lined paper to write a grocery list. Or use the [Sample Grocery List handout](#) included in the lesson.

Place a pile of circulars from local stores at the demo station, as well as any coupon books or flyers that are available.

Invite participants to grab a circular and tell them to spend some time reviewing the circulars to get an idea of what is seasonal and what is on sale and also to find ideas for meals. They may have some family recipes in mind or you can provide some printed AHA recipes. Or look at [Healthy for Good Recipes](#) for ideas.



SAY:

Plan as many dinner meals as you have time for this week and make a grocery list with the needed ingredients. Fill in the days of the week with the dishes you plan to prepare.



Remember you may be able to use leftovers on one or more days.

Once all participants have finished filling out their weekly meal plan and grocery list, invite them to share with the people around them.

Shop Smart & Save

Smart shopping on a budget means knowing what to buy and when.



At Home



Understand the food needs and budget of your household.

Think about: How many people am I buying for? Do they have any special needs such as food allergies?



Know what you have. Before you go grocery shopping, check your pantry, fridge, freezer and garden, if you have one, to see what you have in stock. Using the oldest items first (first in, first out) helps save money and reduce food waste.



Plan your meals. Review grocery and coupon apps and websites to incorporate items that are available on sale or special into your eating plan. **Tip:** Keeping recipes and old meal plans all in one place makes meal planning easier.



Make a shopping list. Write down what you need, including details and amounts. Note any discounts you expect. Be ready to swap items if they are out of stock or if you find cheaper options.

At the Grocery Store



Compare prices. Look at the price tags on the shelves for the foods you are considering buying. When comparing different sizes and brands of similar products, use the unit price rather than total price to find the best value. Take advantage of store brands, which are often more affordable and nutritionally similar.



Consider sales and coupons but also nutrition facts. A coupon may not always be the best deal or the healthiest option. Check the ingredients list and the Nutrition Facts label to identify nutrient-dense foods for a healthy diet.



Buy in bulk. Before you take advantage of the bargain of bulk-buying, be sure you can use or store what you are buying. Canned, frozen and dried produce without sodium or added sugars are nutritious choices that last longer than fresh, reducing the risk of spoilage before use.



Save with seasonal produce. Buying produce that is in season can save you money. Consider canning or freezing it for year-round use.



Do not check out at the checkout. Pay attention at the register or review the receipt before leaving the store to make sure you get all the discounts and savings you expected. Save receipts so you can compare what you spent to what you budgeted and adjust your meal planning and budgeting, if necessary.

For more smart shopping tips, visit heart.org/healthyforgood

This sample grocery list can help you make healthier choices when you shop. Add the quantity you need next to each item, and check if you have a coupon. Planning ahead will help you save time and money! Remember to compare labels and choose products with the lowest amount of sodium, added sugars and saturated fat that you can find in your store.

	Quantity	Coupon
Fresh Vegetables		
Asparagus		
Broccoli		
Carrots		
Cauliflower		
Celery		
Corn		
Cucumbers		
Lettuce/Greens		
Onions		
Peppers		
Potatoes		
Spinach		
Squash		
Sweet potatoes		
Tomatoes		
Zucchini		
Fresh Fruits		
Apples		
Avocados		
Bananas		
Berries		
Cherries		
Grapefruit		
Grapes		
Kiwis		
Lemons/Limes		
Melon		
Oranges		
Peaches		
Pears		
Plums		
Canned/Dry Beans		
Black beans		
Chickpeas		
Kidney beans		
Lima beans		
Pinto beans		
White beans		

	Quantity	Coupon
Frozen Vegetables		
Broccoli		
Cauliflower		
Corn		
Green beans		
Mixed vegetables		
Spinach		
Frozen Fruits		
Berries		
Cherries		
Mixed fruit		
Peaches		
Canned Vegetables		
Corn		
Green beans		
Mixed vegetables		
Peas		
Tomatoes		
Tomato paste/sauce		
Yams		
Canned/Jarred/ Dried Fruits		
Apple sauce		
Apricots		
Dates		
Mixed fruit		
Oranges		
Peaches		
Pineapple		
Prunes		
Raisins		

Sample Grocery List (Continued)

	Quantity	Coupon
Whole Grains		
Bread		
Brown rice		
Cereal		
Couscous		
Oatmeal		
Pasta		
Quinoa		
Tortillas		
Fresh/Frozen Meat & Seafood		
Chicken breasts		
Lean ground beef/turkey		
Lunch meats		
Salmon		
White fish fillets		
Canned/Pouched Meat & Seafood		
Chicken		
Salmon		
Tuna		
Pantry Staples		
Nut butters (peanut, almond)		
Nuts (almonds, walnuts)		
Salsa		
Soups and broths		
Spaghetti sauce		
Cooking/Baking Essentials		
Extra Virgin Olive Oil		
Flour (whole wheat)		
Non-stick cooking spray		
Vegetable/canola oil		
Vinegars		

	Quantity	Coupon
Herbs/Spices & Seasonings		
Basil		
Cilantro		
Garlic		
Mint		
Parsley		
Pepper (black, cayenne, red)		
Salt-free seasoning blend		
Dairy (Low-fat/Fat-free)		
Cheese		
Eggs/egg whites		
Milk		
Yogurt		
Cleaning Supplies & Miscellaneous		



Look for the Heart-Check mark to quickly and easily identify foods that can be part of a heart-healthy eating plan.

SPECIFIC

- What do you want to accomplish?

MEASURABLE

- How will you track your progress towards your goal?

ACHIEVABLE

- Is reaching your goal possible with your full effort?

REALISTIC

- Do you have the resources and ability to achieve your goal? If not, how can you get them?

TIME-BOUND

- When will your goal be achieved?

EXAMPLE OF A SMART GOAL:

I will increase the number of fruit servings I eat daily by 2 cups within the next 3 months.

Personal SMART goal:
