easy meals
healthy families
quick, affordable meal solutions

meijer
experience the savings.
experience the difference.
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This 1924 book was given to me by my mother-in-law after she found it in her mother’s attic several years ago. It was fun to turn the fragile pages and look at the meal planning tips and food costs from the 1920s. Did you know that two jars of peanut butter could be purchased for 25 cents? One thing that was not surprising to me was the way meal planning and preparation were described—as time-consuming, difficult chores. A lot has changed over the past eight decades, but not the way most people feel about fixing meals. I do, however, think we face some new obstacles to meal planning and preparation today, and that is what prompted us to write this guide.

The fact that we are all juggling busy schedules is a given, but many people have a lack of cooking skills and knowledge that drives them to purchase and consume overly processed foods that are high in calories but often low in nutritional value.

This book was written because of a need expressed by families and individuals who want to eat better but need simple direction from the information provided. All the recipes and meal plans have passed the test to be easy, affordable and healthy (in that order). Yes, you will still need to devote some time and energy to plan meals and shop for ingredients, but the rewards of saving money, improving your health and sharing time with your family are worth the effort.

Here’s to easy meals and healthy families. Happy cooking!

Shari Steinbach, MS, RD
Meijer Healthy Living Advisor

“What shall we have for dinner?” This is the constant cry of the housewife, who often feels that housekeeping would be relieved of one of its greatest bugbears if someone else would undertake the planning of the meals.

Mary Swartz Rose, *Feeding the Family*, 2nd Ed. McMillan, 1924
chapter one:

making mealtime matter
What if meal planning was reinvented to be easy, affordable, healthy and, yes, even fun? *Easy Meals, Healthy Families* is your guide to do just that: an easy-to-read, step-by-step plan to rethink mealtime as a time to get together to celebrate and connect with what makes life taste so good.

**simple solutions for busy families**

Here it is in one simple book: the strategies, tips and tools for healthy meal planning today. The Meijer Healthy Living Advisors have done the research and compiled the best-of-the-best to show you how simple it can be to provide affordable, healthy options for those you love the most. There’s no need to break the bank trying to make healthy meals. Included are kitchen basics, affordable ideas, grocery shopping tips, and strategic menu planning options to save time and money, while also helping your family eat healthier.

As part of the *Easy Meals, Healthy Families* guide, we’ve designed an easy-to-use, at-a-glance meal planner (at the end of this book) for your family. This meal planner is your blueprint for building weekly menus that the whole family will eat.

Getting into the habit of planning meals ahead will also help organize your weekly shopping list. From adding the recipe ingredients you’ll need, to simply noting staples you’ve run out of, a shopping list streamlines each trip to the grocery store to save you both time and money. And to make it even more convenient for you, we’ve designed a weekly shopping list as a tool for you to note what you’ll need for the week, and to easily find those items at your local Meijer.

“Preparing your own meals allows you to be the gatekeeper of what goes in your body—keeping out the unhealthy ingredients and letting in the healthy.”

Shari Steinbach, MS, RD, Meijer Dietitian and Healthy Living Advisor

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4 meijer easy meals healthy families
### weekly meal planner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>breakfast</th>
<th>lunch/snacks</th>
<th>dinner</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>monday</strong></td>
<td>blueberry-banana smoothie</td>
<td>turkey + avocado wrap</td>
<td>Greek tilapia</td>
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<tr>
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<td>whole-wheat toast</td>
<td>pretzels</td>
<td>Brown rice</td>
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<td></td>
<td>grapes</td>
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<td>easy breakfast sandwich</td>
<td>Mexican Fiesta Salad</td>
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<td>Orange juice</td>
<td>pineapple chunks</td>
<td>steamed green beans</td>
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<td>chicken wrap</td>
<td>mixed greens salad</td>
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<td>with light dressing</td>
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<td>granola bar</td>
<td>easy beef + bean chili</td>
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<td>PIZZA</td>
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<td>grapes</td>
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<td>hummus-vegetable sandwich</td>
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<td>fat-free milk</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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Print out more weekly meal planners at meijermealbox.com to organize your shopping and menu for the week ahead.

**Sat:** Grandma's Birthday Bring pasta salad
connect, communicate and celebrate with family meals

Improving a child’s eating habits starts at home. As a parent, you can create simple, easy and affordable meals that provide delicious nourishment, while promoting valuable family time in your own kitchen. Creating healthy mealtime habits today can lead to a lifetime of healthy choices.

Family meals provide so much more than a delicious dinner. A family meal is an opportunity to check in, communicate and celebrate. Yet with either work, sports, carpool or homework just about every night, it often seems impossible to get everyone around the table at the same time.

children who eat with their families:
• are less likely to smoke, drink or use drugs
• perform better in school
• are more emotionally content
• have a strong sense of belonging and security
• confide in their parents more
• choose healthier snack foods
• consume less fried food, soda and saturated fat
• learn table manners
• improve communication skills
• have higher self-esteem
• are less likely to be obese
• have better relationships with friends and adults

family meals, one day at a time

Make mealtime matter. Turn off the TV and smartphones, and connect in real time with the people you love most. When you eat family-style—sharing stories, experiences and a healthy meal—you are creating the moments to remember.
the kitchen connects families

When the entire family—from tots to teens and everyone in between—is involved in some part of meal planning, healthy traditions are set in place. Despite the complaints you may hear, everyone takes pride in food preparation. The kitchen is where families gather and memories are made. Kids are proud of their accomplishments and learn life skills. Moms and dads get to brag about culinary success, and the whole family knows “what’s for dinner.”

Here are some ideas for helping your family connect while planning and preparing easy, healthy meals:

**Establish daily routines.** Aim to have at least one family meal each day—breakfast, lunch, dinner or a snack shared at home, in a park or near the athletic field. It’s time together that counts; where and when are not important.

**Eat at home.** Don’t blow your budget eating out on a regular basis, no matter how busy you may be. Home-cooked meals are typically more nutritious, can be offered in appropriate portions, and cost much less than expensive restaurant meals.

**Plan.** Weekly meal planning puts you in control of portion sizes and nutritional balance, and allows the entire family to be part of the process. Encourage children to help plan family meals, so with guidance, they also have control of healthy choices.

**Keep meals simple.** Visit meijermealbox.com/healthy-living for a weekly dinner menu and shopping list developed by the Meijer Healthy Living Advisors.

**Keep your pantry stocked.** A well-stocked pantry makes meal prep easy on busy nights. (See Chapter 2 for a complete pantry list.) And don’t forget the fridge. Fill it with fresh fruits, vegetables, lean meats and seafood, and Meijer’s lowfat dairy products.

**Shop with NuVal®.** Whenever you are food shopping, use NuVal®, the nutritional scoring system at Meijer. It’s an easy way to keep track of nutritional value when it seems too time-consuming and overwhelming to read the product labels. It’s simple: the NuVal® System scores foods on a scale of 1 to 100. The higher the score, the higher the nutritional value. Look for NuVal® Scores on shelf tags and signs near food items throughout Meijer.
save money while making healthy choices

Healthy choices can save quick cash at the checkout, but did you know that smart, healthy choices continue to save you money for the long haul with fewer doctor visits and less sick time from work or school? It’s true. Healthy eating on a budget is simple with a little preplanning and smart shopping. Here’s how to plan, purchase and prepare healthy meals like a pro—and save big bucks doing it.

Plan ahead. Plan weekly menus using Meijer ads filled with great ideas and great prices. Always take ingredient inventory at home, and then make a menu-driven grocery list to reduce impulse purchases.

Use Meijer weekly nutritious menus. Meijer Healthy Living Advisors provide weekly dinner menus, recipes and shopping lists with just one click. Visit mejermealbox.com/healthy-living, click on the “Weekly Nutritious Menu,” print and head to the store.

Use coupons. Check the Meijer ads for great deals, and the Sunday paper for coupons. You can save big with mPerks at mperks.meijer.com. For savings at the checkout, simply access mPerks on your computer or cell phone, digitally clip the coupons, and redeem at checkout.

Use Meijer MealBox budget recipes. Each week, Meijer MealBox creates recipes directly related to the items on sale that week at Meijer, with the top 25 recipes featuring the greatest number of sale items that week. Visit mejermealbox.com/healthy-living, click on “Recipes,” and then click on “Top 25 Budget Meals” to start saving.

Stock up. When the price is right, take advantage and stock up on pantry staples, frozen foods and, especially, family favorites.

Buy Meijer brands. Meijer brand products are a bargain compared to nationally recognized brands. Meijer brands are available in a wide variety: Meijer Naturals, Meijer Organics, Meijer Brand, Meijer Gold, Meijer Basics, Meijer Elements and Meijer Ecowise.

Eat to maintain a healthy weight. When trying to lose weight, choose nutrient-rich foods (foods high in nutrients, but low in calories) using NuVal®, the nutritional scoring system at Meijer. The higher the number, the healthier the product. Eating right will help trim your waistline—and your food bill.

Go meatless. Replacing meat with plant proteins (beans, peas, nuts or soy) one or two days a week will decrease food costs while still providing your family the nutrition they need.

Shop smart with aisle-by-aisle savings. Take your shopping list with you, and buy only what’s listed. The few additional purchases should be family favorites on sale, which can be conveniently frozen or placed in your pantry.

Store foods quickly and correctly. At the store, buy frozen and refrigerated foods last. Once at home, quickly refrigerate perishables, and freeze foods that won’t be used right away to prevent spoilage. Use a marker to write the purchase date on each item, and always rotate food so that the oldest is used first.
chapter two:
cooking tools
and tips
Prep like a pro. You’ve made the pledge to cook more and eat better, but is your kitchen well-equipped for healthy cooking? Having the right cookware, appliances and utensils can make an enormous difference in how you cook.

be kitchen-ready for healthy meals made easy

Stocking up on the right kitchen equipment is a long-term investment into healthier meals for your family. And as any chef will tell you, having quality cooking and baking equipment makes cooking easier and more enjoyable, so you’ll do it more often. You don’t need a lot of specialized gear.

Here are the cooking tools available at Meijer* that you can’t do without as you prepare affordable, healthy meals.

*Not all items are available in all stores.
Kitchen Aid® stand mixer and accessories. The king of kitchen appliances on everyone’s kitchen wish list, and with good reason. This high-performance, do-it-all mixer has all the bells and whistles ready and waiting to be put to work slicing, chopping, grinding, shredding, grating, puréeing, mixing and kneading.

Cuisinart® Mini-Prep® food processor. This little powerhouse will be your go-to favorite. It’s the extra set of hands you’ve always wanted to chop, dice, slice and purée, all in a matter of seconds.

Presto® electric skillet. This skillet does it all: grilling, stewing, frying and even one-dish casseroles. Omelets, pancakes, chili, stew—breakfast, lunch and dinner prepared in one perfect appliance.

Cuisinart® blender/immersion blender. A blender makes so much more than smoothies. Use it to make breadcrumbs, blend bisque soups, purée sauces and, of course, whip up quick, nutritious smoothies. And the handheld version is even more convenient: Blend or purée soups and sauces right in the pot.

Crock Pot® slow cooker. If you are a busy mom, the slow cooker is your best friend. Throw everything into it in the morning, and come home to a house filled with the home-cooked aroma as if you were cooking a savory meal all day.

Cuisinart® toaster oven. Never underestimate the power of the toaster oven. Perfect for broiling, baking, roasting, warming up leftovers, making a small batch of cookies, and making simply the best toasted cheese sandwich ever.

George Foreman® nonstick electric grill. Indoor electric grills allow you to grill anything and everything evenly and quickly, from the convenience of your kitchen countertop.

Aroma® rice cooker. Rice may be the simplest food, but it’s one of the most difficult to cook perfectly. A rice cooker takes the guessing out of preparing rice, and guarantees light, fluffy, restaurant quality every time.

West Bend® breadmaker. Anyone who doesn’t love a bread machine doesn’t own one yet. The warm welcome of freshly baked bread says family, and having this fresh-baked goodness in your own home couldn’t be easier.

Panasonic® microwave. You may already have a microwave, but how old is it? Today’s microwaves offer so much more than making popcorn and reheating your coffee. When it’s time for an update, check out the microwave technology at Meijer, and see what it can do for you.

More selections available at meijer.com.

how to stock your fridge and freezer

dairy
- Meijer eggs
- Meijer light sour cream
- Meijer lowfat milk or Meijer Organics soymilk
- Meijer lowfat plain, Greek or flavored yogurt
- Meijer reduced fat cheeses
- Meijer butter

fruits and vegetables
- Bagged salad greens
- Fresh fruits
- Fresh herbs
- Fresh vegetables
- Meijer frozen berries and fruit
- Meijer frozen vegetables
- Steam-in-the-bag fresh vegetables

condiments and flavors
- Markets of Meijer hummus
- Meijer jams or fruit preserves
- Meijer jarred pasta sauce
- Meijer light salad dressings
- Meijer lite mayonnaise
- Meijer mustard
- Meijer salsa
- Meijer tomato ketchup
- Reduced-sodium soy sauce

meat
- Certified Angus Beef® lean ground beef or Meijer turkey
- Lean chops and steaks
- Markets of Meijer low sodium deli meats
- Meijer boneless, skinless chicken breasts

seafood
- Individually frozen fish fillets
- Meijer shell-on white shrimp
essential kitchen equipment

Here are the top kitchen essentials that will help you work smarter, faster, more efficiently, and make cooking enjoyable.

measuring tools

Dry measuring cups. To measure dry and solid ingredients. Basic set: 1 cup, ½ cup, ½ cup and ¼ cup.

Liquid measuring cups. To measure liquid ingredients. Glass or plastic cups with a pouring spout, and marked with clearly visible metric and unit measurements.

Measuring spoons. To measure small amounts of liquid and dry ingredients. Basic set: 1 tablespoon, 1 teaspoon, ½ teaspoon and ¼ teaspoon.

cutting tools

Bread knife. Has a serrated edge to cut bread, sandwiches and cakes.

Chef’s knife. To chop, slice and mince.

Cutting boards. To protect counter while cutting. (Keep boards for fruits/vegetables and meat separate.)

Garlic press. To crush garlic cloves quickly and efficiently; also used to mince garlic.

Grater. Available in different sizes to grate foods (cheese) or make zest (citrus).

Hand-held can opener. To open cans or remove bottle caps.

Kitchen shears. To cut dried fruits, snip herbs and trim fat from poultry and meat.

Paring knife. A short knife used to remove skin, as well as cut and slice fruits and vegetables.

Vegetable peeler. To remove the outer skin or peel of fruits and vegetables.
mixing tools

**Mixing bowls.** Glass, plastic or metal bowls to hold foods as they are mixed.

**Mixing spoons.** Metal, wooden or plastic spoons used to beat, mix and stir.

**Silicone or rubber spatulas.** To remove food from spoons, sides of bowls, pans, jars and cans.

**Whisk.** To blend ingredients until smooth, or incorporate air into a mixture.

draining tools

**Colander.** Perforated bowl to drain cooked pasta and wash fresh produce.

**Slotted spoons.** To lift solid food from liquid or sauce and drain away liquid.

**Strainer.** To separate solids from liquids, such as draining canned beans.

cookware and bakeware

**Baking sheet.** Flat cooking pans to hold foods during baking.

**Casserole dishes.** To bake mixed dishes and desserts.

**Cooling rack.** Wire racks to elevate hot food and allow quick cooling.

**Grill pan.** Designed to facilitate indoor grilling on a stovetop.

**Roasting pan.** Designed to roast large meat or poultry items.

**Saucepans or pots with lids.** To cook sauces and food such as rice, pasta and soups.

**Skillet/Sauté pans.** Nonstick stovetop pans in which to brown and fry food.

**Steamer basket.** To hold food in saucepan above boiling water; has small holes to allow steam to cook the food.

how to stock your pantry

**grains**

- Meijer all-purpose flour and whole wheat flour
- Meijer brown rice
- Meijer Naturals 100% whole wheat bread
- Meijer whole grain cereals
- Meijer whole wheat crackers
- Whole-wheat couscous
- Whole-wheat pasta

**protein**

- Canned chicken
- Meijer canned beans
- Meijer canned tuna and salmon

**fruits and vegetables**

- Dried fruits
- Meijer canned fruit (no-sugar-added or in 100% fruit juice)
- Meijer canned vegetables (no-salt-added)
- Meijer reduced sodium vegetable based soups
- Meijer tomato sauce
- Meijer unsweetened applesauce

**healthy fats**

- Almond butter
- Meijer canola oil and olive oil
- Meijer peanut butter
- Meijer walnuts, almonds, pecans, peanuts

**staples**

- Herbs, spices and salt-free seasonings
- Low-sodium broths
- Meijer baking soda and baking powder
- Meijer balsamic vinegar and apple cider vinegar
- Meijer vanilla extract
3

chapter three: nutrition made simple with NuVal®
We now know families who eat together reap benefits that last a lifetime, and yet the difficult questions remain: How do I know what to cook? What does a healthy meal look like? Will my family like it?

The answers are all right here: exactly what foods provide the best nutritional value, and how to select from the best-of-the-best for health when navigating the grocery store.

you are what you eat

Eating healthy doesn’t guarantee you’ll never get an illness, but experts agree that when you make wise food selections, you may, in fact, reduce the risks. The old saying, “You are what you eat,” rings particularly true when referring to nutritional value. Choosing the right foods isn’t as hard as it seems when you know exactly what to look for and understand proper portion control.

*Easy Meals, Healthy Families* focuses on foods and ingredients that are considered “nutrient-rich.” These foods contain the most vitamins, minerals and other nutrients for the fewest number of calories. Choosing nutrient-rich foods and ingredients for your recipes is the foundation to building a healthier plate.

A quick overview of foods to choose:

- Brightly colored fruits and Meijer 100% fruit juices
- Various vibrant-colored vegetables
- Whole, fortified and fiber-rich grains
- Meijer fat free and lowfat milk, cheese and yogurt
- Meijer lean meats, skinless poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts

**strategies for better eating and better health**

1. **Understand nutrition basics.** Knowledge is power for healthy mealtime choices. Learn where calories come from and how nutrient-rich foods may help prevent disease.

2. **Measure portion sizes.** Even if you are eating healthier foods, watching portion sizes is still necessary. For more information on portion control, see page 58.

3. **Don’t skip meals.** Fuel your body throughout the day to keep energy up, boost metabolism and prevent the hunger feeling. People who skip meals are less likely to maintain a healthy weight.

4. **Plan meals ahead.** Planning menus, creating shopping lists and buying weekly supplies from Meijer saves time and money, and provides healthier meals all week long.

5. **Eat at home.** People who eat out consume more calories, as it is very difficult to control ingredients and portions.

6. **Involve your family.** Make meal planning, shopping and cooking a family affair, and eat together whenever possible. The healthy physical, nutritional and emotional benefits are endless, and continue well into adulthood.
NuVal® at Meijer makes shopping simple

If deciding what’s healthy over what’s not when planning nutritious meals for your family seems overwhelming, you are not alone. That’s why the Meijer Healthy Living team loves the NuVal® Nutritional Scoring System, an at-a-glance system that measures nutritional value on a scale from 1 to 100. It’s easy to use: the higher the score, the better the nutrition.

empower your family with nutritional knowledge

The NuVal® System goes beyond food labels and nutritional claims. NuVal®, which was developed by an independent panel of renowned medical and nutrition experts, considers more than 30 nutrients and nutrition factors—and their impact on health outcomes—to determine a food’s score. The result: every NuVal® Score takes the guesswork out of making the most nutritious food choices.

NuVal® gives you quick and easy nutritional comparisons on a simple 1 to 100 scale: the higher score wins. What’s easier than that? So next time you’re in the grocery aisles at Meijer, just look for the NuVal® Score on the shelf tag under the product. Then compare the scores of foods within the same category to determine which ones are more nutrient-rich, so you can “trade up” to healthier choices. For example, Meijer regular pasta has a NuVal® Score of 61, while Meijer whole grain pasta has a NuVal Score® of 91.

NuVal® makes it easy to quickly choose more healthy options. But for specific dietary needs or medical conditions where you need to limit or increase certain nutrients, always read the nutrition facts label and ingredient list on the product.

To find out more about NuVal®, visit meijermealbox.com/nuval or nuval.com.

Get your family in on the hunt for good nutrition. Encourage your kids to play “I Spy” with NuVal® numbers and search out the healthiest choices. NuVal® is simple enough even for young children to understand. All they have to do is look at a single number on a shelf tag.
eating for health
You want to make healthy food choices for yourself and your family. Knowledge is power—understanding what a balanced diet consists of is the first step to building a better plate.

fruits and vegetables
Almost everyone needs to eat more fruits and vegetables. Eating a wide variety of colorful fruits and vegetables helps ensure that you are getting the different nutrients each fruit and vegetable contains. Add daily servings in these five ways—fresh, canned, frozen, dried or in 100% juice.

fruit and vegetable tips
- Drink only 1 to 2 servings of Meijer 100% fruit and vegetable juices a day.
- Select canned vegetables that are low in sodium or salt-free.
- Select Meijer frozen vegetables with no added butter or sauces.
- Prep fresh fruits and veggies ahead for snack and recipe needs.
- Select dried fruits (Meijer raisins, cherries, apricots) for snacks and lunch bags.
- Keep bagged salads and spinach on hand for easy meals.

whole grains
Whole grains are loaded with fiber and nutrients. Try to make at least half of your daily grain choices whole grains. Whole grains, that are low in fat and cholesterol, may help reduce the risk for heart disease, diabetes and certain cancers.

whole-grain tips
- Choose whole-grain cereals with at least 3 to 4 grams of fiber per serving.
- Substitute quick-cooking brown rice or quinoa for white rice.
- Use Meijer Naturals 100% whole wheat bread, Meijer whole wheat pitas, whole wheat English muffins or whole wheat buns.
- Choose whole-grain crackers and Meijer light popcorn for snacks.
- Try Meijer Organics whole wheat or multi grain extra pasta varieties.
- Look for products where whole grain is the first ingredient listed.
fat-free and lowfat dairy
Including nine essential nutrients such as calcium, potassium, vitamin D and protein, dairy is a powerhouse of nutrition. These essential nutrients are especially important for building bone mass during childhood and adolescence, and continue to be important as we get older. Swapping full-fat dairy products for fat-free or lowfat fat dairy products (Meijer milk, cheese, yogurt), is linked to maintaining a healthy weight and blood pressure.

dairy tips
• Switch from whole milk to Meijer 2%, and gradually to Meijer 1% or fat free milk.
• Replace regular cheese with all-natural Meijer 2% cheeses (sliced, diced and shredded).
• Drink Meijer coffee, Meijer tea, lattes and hot chocolate made with Meijer fat free milk.
• Choose lowfat string cheese and Meijer lowfat yogurt, which are nutrient-rich snacks.
• Substitute fat-free evaporated milk in recipes calling for the full-fat version.
• Choose Meijer light ice cream or lowfat frozen yogurt.

lean protein
The lean protein your body needs is found not only in meats, poultry and fish, but also Meijer eggs, Meijer beans, soy, Meijer nuts and various vegetables. Eating a variety of protein sources provides important nutrients such as B vitamins, as well as iron and zinc needed to boost the immune system, build and repair muscle, and help brain function.

protein tips
• Select lean, trimmed meats and skinless poultry.
• Look for the words “loin” and “round” in the name of lean cuts.
• Select ground beef made from sirloin or labeled 96% lean.
• Select fish rich in Omega-3 fatty acids, such as wild-caught salmon, tuna and trout.
• Prepare, then refrigerate, hard-cooked eggs for lunch or breakfast to go.
• Purchase healthy nuts, nut butters and seeds for a quick, filling snack.

healthy fats
Your body needs some fat for good health. Fats help you absorb fat-soluble vitamins—A, D, E and K—as well as carotenoids, plus they supply essential fatty acids necessary for children to grow properly. These fatty acids also keep the skin, brain and the nervous system healthy and functioning properly. Health experts recommend including foods with more “good” monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, and limiting consumption of saturated and trans fats.

fat tips
• Choose oils such as Meijer canola oil or olive oil that are high in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, and contain essential fatty acids.
• Consume Meijer nuts, Meijer peanut butter, seeds, Meijer olives, avocados and some fish fillets with natural, good-for-you fats and oils.
• Consume fewer fats that remain solid at room temperature, such as butter and lard.
• Avoid any product that contains trans fat or lists hydrogenated fat or partially hydrogenated fat on the label.
• Choose lowfat or fat-free salad dressings.
• Fat is the most concentrated source of calories and should be consumed in limited portions.
chapter four: healthy meals with MyPlate
We all remember learning the food groups in grade school. However, building a healthy plate can seem more than elementary. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) makes it much easier with MyPlate, their easy-to-follow nutrition icon.

**a balanced plate**

MyPlate replaces the MyPyramid food group symbol and brings portion control into the spotlight. MyPlate makes it easy to build a balanced, nutritious meal by offering a visual reminder of how to eat healthfully and in the proper proportions. It emphasizes fruits and vegetables, and encourages Americans to make half of the plate fruits and vegetables, about one-fourth of the plate lean protein, and about one-fourth of the plate whole grains. The circle shape next to the plate represents dairy products, including lowfat milk.

Use the MyPlate icon to see exactly how to proportionally plan each meal to be healthy, emphasizing nutrient-rich foods for the most vitamins and minerals with the least amount of calories.

For more information, go to choosemyplate.gov.

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MyPlate makes it easy to plan balanced meals:

**balancing calories**
- Enjoy your food, but eat less.
- Avoid oversized portions.

**foods to increase**
- Fruits and vegetables should be half your plate.
- Replace half your grains with whole grains.
- Switch to fat-free or lowfat 1% milk.

**foods to reduce**
- Choose lower-sodium options in foods like soup, bread and frozen meals.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks.
build a better plate with MyPlate and NuVal®

MyPlate and NuVal® can be used together to make healthy food choices. Use the NuVal® Score to pick the most nutritious foods; then use MyPlate to help you make wise choices about proportions.

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<td>Shrimp</td>
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a simple MyPlate makeover

MyPlate makes it easy to replace routine family meals with nutritious, delicious alternatives that will quickly establish healthy eating to last a lifetime.

Look how simple it is to build a balanced meal using healthy food substitutions. With a few affordable alternatives, your family will receive vitamin-rich fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins, while still enjoying the foods they crave.

Here is how to easily modify a family dinner to power up the meal’s nutritional value by reducing fat, sodium and calories, and still providing home-cooked goodness that will make your mouth water.

before

<table>
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<td>Alfredo rotini noodles</td>
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after

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<td>4 ounce pork tenderloin</td>
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<td>fat-free milk</td>
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experience the savings. experience the difference.

23 whole grains filled with fiber

vitamin D

lean protein

iron-rich
chapter five:
start with breakfast
Fitting a daily breakfast into the morning routine should be a priority to keep your family on the path to healthy living.

**jump-start every day with breakfast**

Skipping breakfast is like starting your car without gas. Breakfast is the early morning pit stop for your body after 8 to 12 hours without a meal or snack. A nutrition-packed breakfast will give you and your family the energy to perform better, both mentally and physically.

**what does a healthy breakfast look like?**

When planning breakfast, include carbohydrates such as whole grains and fruits for quick energy, and add protein for sustained energy. Good protein sources include lowfat dairy, eggs, lean meats and peanut butter. Even if you don’t feel hungry first thing in the morning, start with a light bite—100% fruit or vegetable juice, or 100% whole-wheat toast. Then have a nutritious mid-morning snack like lowfat yogurt or lowfat string cheese.

Need quick and simple ideas for breakfast and beyond? We’ve got you covered with our favorite “Top 10” quick-fix ideas throughout this book. From breakfast to lunch to snacks to dinner, you’ll see how easy it is to fill your family’s weekly meal planner with easy-to-assemble dishes that everyone will actually eat.

**Experts agree on the many benefits of eating breakfast:**

- People who eat breakfast tend to eat fewer calories throughout the day.
- Breakfast eaters have more energy for work, have higher productivity levels, and are better at tasks involving memory.
- Breakfast provides people with more strength and endurance throughout the day.
- People who eat breakfast have better concentration and problem-solving ability.
- Children and teens that eat breakfast daily tend to have higher school attendance and less tardiness, and are less likely to be overweight.
how to stock your kitchen for breakfast

Mornings are an extremely busy time for families, but a kitchen stocked with healthy breakfast ingredients will provide the nutritional get-up-and-go your family needs to start a healthy day. Use this list to stock your kitchen with everything you need to give your family “the most important meal of the day.”

**refrigerator**
- Fresh fruits: apples, kiwis, grapefruit, oranges, grapes
- Fresh vegetables: red and green bell peppers, spinach, broccoli
- Hummus
- Lowfat ham
- Lowfat Greek, or fat-free Meijer vanilla yogurt and prepared yogurt smoothie drinks
- Meijer 100% juice: orange juice, apple juice, pineapple juice
- Meijer eggs or egg substitute
- Meijer fat free or 1% milk
- Meijer lowfat cottage cheese
- Meijer lowfat cream cheese
- Meijer lowfat shredded cheese and string cheese

**freezer**
- Unsweetened frozen fruit: strawberries, blueberries, peaches, raspberries, mangos
- Whole-grain French toast
- Whole-grain pancakes
- Whole-grain waffles

**pantry**
- 100% vegetable juice
- Dried fruit
- Fresh fruit: bananas
- Meijer applesauce
- Meijer fruit and nut granola bars
- Meijer graham crackers
- Meijer honey
- Meijer lite syrup
- Meijer Naturals 100% whole wheat bread
- Meijer Naturals peanut butter
- Meijer nuts and seeds: almonds, walnuts, peanuts, sunflower seeds
- Meijer oatmeal
- Meijer salsa
- Meijer wheat pita bread
- No-sugar-added canned fruits
- Spices: cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice
- Whole-grain cereals: bran flakes, lowfat granola
- Whole-wheat bagels
- Whole-wheat English muffins
tropical
Blend until smooth 1 large banana, 1 cup frozen no-sugar-added whole strawberries, 1 ripe, peeled and cubed mango, 1 cup no-sugar-added cranberry juice, 1 tablespoon protein powder (optional) and 1 cup ice cubes.

pomegranate
Blend until smooth ½ cup silken tofu, 1 cup frozen mixed berries, ½ cup pomegranate juice, 1 to 2 tablespoons honey and ¼ cup ice cubes.

blueberry–flax
Blend until smooth 1 (16-ounce) package blueberries, 1 banana, 2 tablespoons ground flaxseed, 2 cups soymilk, 1 tablespoon honey and 1 cup water.

raspberry–mango
Blend until smooth 1½ cups fresh raspberries, 1 cup frozen cubed mango, 1 container Greek vanilla yogurt, ¼ cup water and 2 to 4 ice cubes.

blueberry–banana
Blend until smooth 1 cup frozen blueberries, 1 frozen banana, cut into chunks, ½ cup ice cubes and 1 cup chilled plain almond milk.

10 smoothie recipes
Break out the blender and in 10 minutes or less, you can make a delicious icy drink jam-packed with enough fruit, protein and dairy to be a great breakfast or perfect snack. Each recipe makes approximately 2 servings.

cantaloupe–coconut
Blend until smooth ½ cup fat-free milk, 1 cup fat-free vanilla frozen yogurt, 2 tablespoons cream of coconut, 3 cups chopped fresh cantaloupe, ½ cup chopped fresh pineapple and 1½ cups ice cubes.

organic berry
Blend until smooth 4 cups organic berries, 2 teaspoons brown sugar, 1 (6-ounce) container lowfat vanilla yogurt and 1 cup plain lowfat kefir. Add ½ to 1 cup cranberry juice; blend again.

strawberry–banana
Blend until smooth 2 cups frozen strawberries, 2 cups fat-free or soy milk, 2 tablespoons honey and 1 sliced banana.
Here are 10 delicious, energy-filled ways to boost the power (and flavor) of whole-grain toast. When choosing what to toast, choose any whole-grain bread, bagel or English muffin that is 80 to 100 calories and has at least 3 grams of fiber per serving.

**banana–nut**
Spread on toast ¼ cup mashed banana and top with 1 tablespoon chopped almonds or walnuts, and a sprinkle of cinnamon.

**cheese ’n apple**
Cover toast with 1 slice lowfat Cheddar cheese and 6 thin apple slices. Warm in the microwave for 15 seconds.

**funky monkey**
Completely cover toast with 1 tablespoon peanut butter. Add half of a sliced banana, 1 tablespoon raisins and a drizzle of honey.

**very veggie**
Smooth 2 tablespoons of hummus over toast and add ¼ cup thinly sliced red or green bell pepper.

**very berry**
Spread toast with 1 tablespoon light cream cheese. Cover with ¼ cup fresh strawberry slices and/or blueberries; drizzle with warmed no-sugar-added fruit preserves.

**south-of-the-border**
Smooth one-fourth of a mashed avocado over toast. Add a dash of salt, sprinkle ½ teaspoon lime juice, and top with 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh tomatoes.

**Tex-Mex**
Coat toast with 2 tablespoons refried beans; add 1 tablespoon chopped green chilies and sprinkle with 1 tablespoon of shredded lowfat Cheddar. Warm until bubbly.

**bruschetta**
Cover toast with 2 tablespoons fat-free ricotta; add fresh tomato slices and a sprinkle of Parmesan. Serve warm.

**apple pie**
Use 3 tablespoons no-sugar-added applesauce to cover toast, then a sprinkle of apple pie spice.

**tea toast**
Smooth 2 tablespoons of light garlic and herb soft cheese over toast. Top with thinly sliced fresh cucumber.
When it comes to breakfast, healthy food can absolutely be fast food. Simply include at least two different food groups, and be sure to choose family favorites, so the quick grab 'n go is easily added to the morning routine.

**the continental**
1 small banana, 1 lowfat string cheese and 1 small whole-wheat blueberry muffin

**go Greek**
1 (6-ounce) container fat-free Greek yogurt; ½ cup blueberries, 4 whole-grain crackers

**great granola**
1 almond, honey and flaxseed granola bar; 1 cup fresh grapes, 1 cup fat-free milk

**hit the trail**
1 resealable plastic bag of trail mix (1 cup whole-grain cereal, ¼ cup raisins, 2 tablespoons almonds), 1 box 100% juice blend

**make it a parfait**
1 (6-ounce) container lowfat yogurt layered with ½ cup lowfat granola and ½ cup sliced strawberries

**easy breakfast sandwich**
1 slice 2%-milk cheese, 1 fried egg, 1 toasted whole-grain English muffin, ½ cup 100% orange juice

**groovy smoothie**
1 fruit smoothie (¼ cup frozen berries, half of a small banana, ½ cup fat-free milk and ice cubes), 1 slice whole-grain toast

**grab ’n go**
¼ cup almonds, 1 (6-ounce) container lowfat yogurt, 1 box 100% juice blend

**a-peeling apples**
1 small apple, sliced; dipped in 2 tablespoons peanut butter; rolled in ½ cup whole-grain cereal

**quicker quiche**
1 made-ahead mini quiche (Combine 4 eggs, ¼ cup sautéed onion, ½ cup cooked spinach, ½ cup shredded cheese and ¼ cup lowfat milk. Pour into 6 nonstick muffin cups. Bake at 350°F for 20 minutes.), ½ cup blueberries
### month of quick and healthy breakfast menus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Meals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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| **Week 1** | **MON** | • lowfat cottage cheese  
• sliced strawberries  
• whole-wheat toast with trans fat-free margarine |
| | **TUE** | • lowfat vanilla yogurt layered with blueberries, sliced strawberries and sliced kiwi  
• granola |
| | **WED** | • cooked whole oatmeal  
• dried cherries  
• slivered almonds  
• brown sugar  
• fat-free milk |
| | **THU** | • toasted whole-wheat English muffin sandwich with poached egg, Canadian bacon and 2% cheese  
• grapefruit |
| | **FRI** | • unsweetened whole-grain cereal  
• fresh berries  
• fat-free milk  
• whole-wheat toast with trans fat-free margarine |

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Day</th>
<th>Meals</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>MON</strong></td>
<td>• lowfat yogurt mixed with unsweetened wheat cereal, nuts or seeds and dried fruit</td>
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| | **TUE** | • breakfast wrap with whole-wheat tortilla  
• scrambled egg  
• shredded lowfat cheese  
• salsa  
• fresh orange |
| | **WED** | • whole-grain banana bread*  
• fresh pear  
• fat-free milk |
| | **THU** | • blueberry-corn muffins*  
• small banana  
• fat-free milk |
| | **FRI** | • French toast made with whole-wheat bread dipped into egg and fat-free milk with a pinch of cinnamon  
• light syrup  
• grapefruit |

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Meals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Week 3** | **MON** | • vanilla soymilk, banana, frozen unsweetened strawberries blended together  
• whole-wheat toast with no-sugar-added jam |
| | **TUE** | • cooked Canadian bacon and lowfat cheese on 100% whole-wheat bread  
• low-sodium 100% veggie juice |
| | **WED** | • small whole-grain frozen waffles, toasted  
• banana slices  
• chopped walnuts  
• light syrup |
| | **THU** | • breakfast wrap with whole-grain tortilla, scrambled egg, lowfat cheese and avocado  
• diced melon |
| | **FRI** | • whole-grain English muffin pizza with no-salt-added tomato sauce and shredded part-skim mozzarella  
• 100% orange juice |

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Meals</th>
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</table>
| **Week 4** | **MON** | • small whole-grain blueberry pancakes  
• light syrup  
• lowfat milk |
| | **TUE** | • whole-grain English muffin  
• crunchy peanut butter  
• fresh clementine  
• fat-free milk |
| | **WED** | • 100% whole-wheat toast  
• lowfat cream cheese  
• thin slices of smoked salmon |
| | **THU** | • cooked oatmeal with raisins, walnuts and brown sugar  
• fat-free milk |
| | **FRI** | • whole-grain flatbread crackers topped with tomato slices and lowfat cheese, microwaved until cheese melts  
• 100% apple juice |

*Find these recipes on meijermealbox.com.
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<tr>
<td>lowfat vanilla yogurt</td>
<td>small sliced banana</td>
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<td></td>
<td>fat-free milk</td>
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**morning rush**

Create little containers of no-cook oatmeal-to-go. Mix ½ cup whole oatmeal, 2 tablespoons raisins, 2 tablespoons chopped walnuts and 1 teaspoon cinnamon in an airtight container. Pour in ⅔ cup almond milk and refrigerate overnight. Grab it in the morning for a nutritious breakfast on the run.

**big batch on the weekend**

Double up weekend breakfasts to freeze for the busy week ahead. Whole-grain banana bread*, blueberry–corn muffins*, and potato and pepper frittata* can be made ahead and frozen or refrigerated for your busy mornings ahead.

**breakfast for dinner**

Turn mealtime upside down by serving morning favorites for dinner. Make whole-wheat pancakes for Sunday night supper, then freeze leftovers for the week ahead. Simply pop the frozen pancakes in the toaster or microwave for a delicious, quick morning meal.

For more recipes and breakfast ideas, visit meijermealo.com.
chapter six:
lunchtime done right
Getting good grades isn’t just about what’s in your child’s schoolbooks; it’s also about what’s in his or her lunchbox. Yes, it takes time to pack a lunch, but think of it as a simple 1-2-3 process.

lunch: easy as 1-2-3

The 1-2-3 system of building a better lunch is healthy, low cost and so incredibly easy once you break down lunchtime into three essential components. With these essential foods for the midday meal, lunch will provide your family the energy and nutrition they need to tackle the rest of their day.

1: Choose a lean protein and/or dairy item.
2: Add whole wheat or whole grains.
3: Add colorful fruits and/or vegetables.

And lunch rules aren’t just for school, you know. Packing a nutritious, 1-2-3 lunch for the workday is the perfect way to save money, save calories, and establish healthy eating habits at the office or workplace as well. When your kids see you take lunch to work, you are setting an example for a lifetime of healthy eating, long after school days are over.

lunch on a budget

Taking a healthy lunch to school or work is one of the easiest ways to trim your budget. But for even more savings, there are ways to cut costs and build lunches that are both delicious and super-affordable.

Look to leftovers. Use cooked whole-grain pastas in chilled salads, or shred leftover chicken to add to canned vegetable soup.

Take matters into your own hands. There are so many popular lunch kits marketed to kids. Though very convenient, they are often high in sodium and quite costly. With a simple, reusable divided container, you can replicate your kids’ favorite lunch kits with healthier and more affordable ingredients.

lighter lunches less than $2

Below are a few quick and healthy single-serve lunches all under $2 per serving.

chicken and vegetable pasta salad
Combine 1 cup cooked whole-wheat pasta with ½ cup thawed frozen vegetables (broccoli, carrots, cauliflower), ¼ cup cooked shredded chicken and 2 tablespoons light Italian dressing. Serve with a fresh peach.  
Estimated Cost: $1.98

lunchbox taco salad
Pack 1 cup shredded romaine lettuce, ¼ cup reduced-sodium black beans and ¼ cup chopped tomato in a container. In 3 separate containers pack 2 tablespoons shredded Meijer reduced fat Cheddar, ½ cup crumbled whole-grain tortilla chips and ¼ cup salsa. To eat: Top salad with tortilla chips, cheese and salsa. Serve with 1 banana.  
Estimated Cost: $1.94

beef and cheese pinwheels
Spread 2 tablespoons light cream cheese evenly over 1 multigrain tortilla. Add 3 slices low-sodium lean roast beef and 1 handful baby spinach. Roll tightly and cut into 8 slices. Serve with 1 mini box raisins.  
Estimated Cost: $1.99

Note: Prices vary by market area and are based on the ingredient cost per unit.
the lunch game

The 1-2-3 system is a great way to beat the daily lunch game. And the prize—a brown-bagged lunch full of variety and nutrition that you control.

The game plan is easy. Think 1-2-3: protein, whole grain, fruit and/or veggie every time you plan lunch. And plan ahead. Use the simple chart as a template to plan lunches for the whole family for the upcoming week. Establishing a go-to list designed with this system in mind sets the stage, but mix and match for new and fresh lunch combinations for everyone’s specific tastes.

When you consistently use the 1-2-3 system outlined here, you’ll find an endless supply of lunch ideas to switch, swap and borrow. As long as there are the core components—protein, whole grain, and fruit and/or vegetable—lunch is not only ready in a snap, but also filled with all the vitamins and nutrients kids need to stay energized to learn, think and work all afternoon.

1-2-3 lunch system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. protein/dairy</th>
<th>2. whole grain</th>
<th>3. fruit/veggie</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>soy burger and lowfat cheese</td>
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<td>whole-grain English muffin with tomato sauce</td>
<td>pear, plum or apple</td>
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<tr>
<td>lowfat Swiss cheese and turkey</td>
<td>whole-grain wrap with lowfat ranch dressing</td>
<td>lettuce, cucumber and tomatoes</td>
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<td>lowfat sharp Cheddar and black beans</td>
<td>whole-grain tortilla with salsa</td>
<td>whole-kernel corn, bell peppers</td>
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<td>whole-grain pita bread</td>
<td>romaine lettuce, cucumbers, tomatoes</td>
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<td>whole-wheat pasta and lowfat balsamic vinaigrette</td>
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<tr>
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<td>whole-grain tortilla</td>
<td>spinach and bell peppers</td>
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<tr>
<td>chicken salad</td>
<td>whole-grain English muffin</td>
<td>apple</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
lunches they’ll love

Once you have the 1-2-3 system down pat, it’s easy to shop, assemble and pack better lunches. Whether it’s a kid-friendly twist or more “grown-up gourmet,” the standard sack lunch will be a thing of the past.

Get prepped. By planning ahead, you can streamline your shopping trips. Listing out each 1-2-3 component is an at-a-glance way to see exactly what you need. And remember, at Meijer, always use the NuVal® Scores to trade up to more nutritious ingredients and foods to pack.

Get assembled. Either the night before or in the morning, set up an assembly line. Create workstations for the bread or salad base, for the protein, dairy, vegetable and/or fruit fillers, and for the dressings or condiments. An assembly line will save time and get the kids involved, too.

A typical school year is 180 days. That means potentially 180 lunches, so keep it fresh. Here are some ideas to add to your assembly line that will keep lunches both tasty and healthy.

bread/sandwich base:
- Honey–wheat bagels
- Lettuce leaves (as wraps)
- Meijer Naturals 100% whole wheat bread
- Meijer wheat buns
- Meijer whole wheat tortillas

greens/salad base:
- Arugula
- Baby spinach
- Fresh herbs
- Romaine lettuce
- Salad blends
- Spring greens

great grains:
- Meijer brown rice
- Meijer Organics whole wheat pasta
- Quinoa

vegetable toppings:
- Bell peppers
- Carrots
- Cucumber
- Red onions
- Sprouts
- Tomatoes

fruit toppings:
- Apple
- Banana
- Dried fruits
- Fresh berries
- Grapes

protein:
- Canned Meijer salmon/tuna
- Meijer beans
- Meijer chicken breast
- Meijer lean beef
- Meijer low sodium sliced deli meats
- Meijer nuts/seeds
- Meijer pork tenderloin
- Prosciutto
- Sliced, hard-boiled Meijer eggs

dairy:
- Meijer low fat ricotta
- Meijer lowfat yogurt
- Meijer garden vegetable cream cheese
- Meijer Organics lowfat cottage cheese
- Meijer reduced fat cheddar singles

healthy fats:
- Meijer extra virgin olive oil
- Meijer nuts/seeds
- Meijer olives
- Sliced avocado

spreads:
- Meijer hummus
- Mashed avocado
- Meijer honey/agave nectar
- Meijer peanut butter
- Pesto
- Tzatziki sauce

dressings:
- Meijer balsamic vinegar
- Meijer light salad dressings
- Meijer olive oil
10 ways to make sandwiches, wraps and rolls

Thai beef lettuce wrap
Combine ¼ cup matchstick carrots, 1 chopped garlic clove, 1 teaspoon minced ginger, juice of 4 limes, 2 teaspoons Sriracha chili sauce, ½ bunch chopped cilantro and 1 bunch chopped green onions in a large bowl. Stir in 1 pound cooked, crumbled ground beef. Spoon into lettuce cups.

sweet and veggie turkey
Spread a wheat, spinach or tomato wrap with 1½ tablespoons honey mustard. Top with 3 ounces lean turkey breast and cover with sprouts, lettuce, red onion, julienned carrot, bell peppers or zucchini.

hummus-vegetable sandwich
Spread 1 slice of whole-wheat bread with ¼ cup hummus; spread another slice of whole-wheat bread with 1 tablespoon olive tapenade or 1 tablespoon chopped kalamata olives. Top hummus with ¼ cucumber, thinly sliced, and ¼ cup grated carrot. Use second bread slice to close sandwich.

easy burrito
Spread 1 whole-wheat tortilla with ½ cup refried beans and top with ½ cup lowfat shredded Cheddar. To serve, microwave until hot and top with diced tomatoes, lettuce and salsa.

bistro beef sandwich
Spread 2 tablespoons mashed avocado on 1 whole-wheat or sourdough roll. Fill with 3 ounces lean roast beef and fresh lettuce leaves.

strawberries ’n cream bagel
Spread 1 split raisin bagel with 2 tablespoons light ricotta cheese. Top with ½ cup sliced strawberries, 1 teaspoon honey and a sprinkle of cinnamon.

savory Italian wrap
Spread 1 sun-dried tomato wrap with ½ cup chicken salad (with light mayonnaise). Top with ¼ cup sliced roasted red peppers and 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil.

veggie and lox
Spread 1 slice whole-grain bread with 2 tablespoons veggie cream cheese. Top with ½ cup chopped steamed asparagus spears and 3 ounces sliced smoked salmon.

turkey and avocado wrap
Cover 1 whole-grain flatbread or 1 (6-inch) wheat tortilla with 3 ounces deli turkey, fresh lettuce leaves and 2 tomato slices. Add 3 avocado slices.

ultimate veggie burger
Fill 1 whole-wheat hamburger bun with 1 (3 ounce) veggie patty. Top with 1 tablespoon salsa, sliced red onion and lettuce leaves.

36 meijer easy meals healthy families
10 quick salad ideas

BBQ
Toss: 1 bag romaine with 2 cups shredded chicken, 2 chopped apples and ½ red onion, sliced. For the dressing, mix ¼ cup light ranch dressing with ¼ cup honey BBQ sauce.

Southwest Caesar
Toss: 1 bag romaine with 2 cups shredded chicken; 1 (15 ounce) can drained black beans; 1 (12 ounce) can drained corn; 1 medium tomato cut into wedges; 1 sliced yellow bell pepper; and 3 sliced green onions. Pack each serving with 1 tablespoon lowfat Caesar dressing.

farm fresh
Toss: 1 bag greens with 6 ounces turkey breast, ½ cups broccoli florets, ½ cup drained chickpeas, ½ cup tomatoes, ¼ cup sliced red onion and ¼ cup toasted almonds. Pack each serving with 1 tablespoon light Italian dressing.

Tuscan tuna
Toss: 1 bag baby spinach with 1 (6 ounce) can tuna packed in water, drained, mixed with ¼ cup lemon-dill seafood sauce; 1 (15 ounce) can white beans, drained; 2 tomatoes, chopped; and ½ red onion, sliced.

salmon niçoise
Toss: 1 bag French blend salad with 1 (14.75 ounce) can red salmon, drained; 1 (15 ounce) can new potatoes, drained and halved; 1 (4.25 ounce) can green beans, drained; 2 large tomatoes, cut into wedges; and 2 hard-boiled eggs, cut into wedges. Pack each serving with 2 tablespoons light Italian dressing.

Thai beef
Toss: 1 bag romaine with 8 ounces roast beef; 1 large red bell pepper, cut into thin strips; 1 cucumber, peeled and chopped; 4 green onions, thinly sliced; and 1 (14 ounce) can bean sprouts, drained. For dressing, mix ¼ cup light Italian dressing, 2 tablespoons lime juice and 1 to 2 tablespoons Thai fish sauce.

curried ham
Toss: 1 bag baby lettuce with 8 ounces cooked ham cubes; 1 (11 ounce) can mandarin oranges, drained, with 3 tablespoons juice reserved; ¼ cup each chopped green onion, diced celery, plump raisins and roasted peanuts. For the dressing, combine reserved juice, ½ cup plain yogurt, ¼ cup light mayo and 1 tablespoon curry powder.

Mediterranean shrimp
Toss: 1 bag mixed greens with 8 ounces cooked shrimp; 4 ounces reduced-fat feta; 6½ ounces artichoke hearts, drained; ½ cup kalamata olives; and 3 plum tomatoes, sliced. Pack each serving with 1 tablespoon olive oil–balsamic vinaigrette.

Caribbean
Toss: 1 bag spinach with 1 sliced banana, 1 (8 ounce) can drained pineapple, ½ cubed mango, ½ cup each of sliced radishes and cucumbers, and 8 ounces imitation crabmeat. Pack each serving with 1 tablespoon mango vinaigrette. (Blend 1 cup diced mango, ¼ cup orange juice, ¼ cup rice vinegar, 2 tablespoons lime juice and 1 tablespoon brown sugar).

Mexican fiesta
Toss: 1 bag spring greens with 1 (15 ounce) can chili with beans; ½ cup lowfat shredded cheese; 2 tomatoes, cut into wedges; ¼ cup sliced black olives; and 1 cup crumbled tortilla chips. Pack each serving with 2 tablespoons salsa verde.

Recipe note: Divide these salads into 4 separate containers with the dressing on the side so they stay fresh and crunchy.
**pack smart**

No parent wants to put his or her child in harm’s way, so it’s important to learn how to pack healthy and safe lunches. Practicing good food safety habits starts at home. Set a good example, and your children will be reminded of basic food safety in the lunchroom, on field trips and any time they are away from home.

**food safety tips**

- Always wash your hands before preparing and eating food.
- Always wash fruits and vegetables.
- Keep cutting boards for meat and vegetables separate.
- Keep cold foods cold (use freezer packs, insulated lunch boxes and frozen juice boxes).
- Keep hot foods hot (soup should be boiling before adding to a thermos).
- Pack sanitizing hand wipes in every lunch box, backpack, sports bag and briefcase.
- Toss any leftovers your child brings home.

Being “food-safe” also means staying on top of any family food allergies. Stay ahead of food allergies, and inquire about the guidelines and food safety practices at your child’s school. This also means educating your kids about safety measures and the most common types of food allergens, even if they don’t have allergies.

**make lunchtime fun time**

A fun, thoughtful piece of home is often the best part of lunch.

Surprise your kids with a silly photograph. Write a note on a banana or orange. Leave a word of encouragement or joke of the day on a tiny note or napkin. Don’t forget teens, and moms and dads, too.

Include an odd-fact-of-the-day, or exciting comment about an upcoming event.

Sometimes a smile is the thing we need most, and lunches are the perfect way to reach out to your family to remind them you’re thinking of them no matter where they are.
chapter seven:
sensible snacking
Snacking between meals won’t necessarily ruin your kid’s dinner or be bad for your healthy-eating goals. In fact, with the right snacks, just the opposite can be true. Sensible snacks can boost energy levels between meals and supply essential vitamins and minerals.

**snack smarter**

Think of snacks as mini-meals. On average, kids get 25% of their daily calories from snacks. Healthy snacking is all about smart choices that provide nutrient-rich fuel for energy, while keeping the calorie count reasonable. Portion control is key for planning snacks. Pre-portion single servings of pretzels, nuts or popcorn for easy-to-grab snacks rather than eating straight from the bag.

Encourage your kids to be mindful eaters, snacking only when they’re hungry. Recognize if your kids are snacking out of boredom or stress, and redirect them to other activities.

Stocking up on these quick and easy snacks can help them (and you) resist the vending machine at school and work, keeping all of you healthy and energized.

Curb the cravings with these easy, healthy snacks:

**craving salty?**
- Whole-wheat pretzels with Meijer honey mustard
- Meijer low fat cheese or string cheese with Meijer whole wheat crackers
- Hummus and Meijer wheat pitas
- Mini pita pizzas with Meijer Organics tomato sauce, Meijer shredded reduced fat cheese, and veggies
- Meijer Organics rice cakes with peanut butter
- Meijer light popcorn seasoned with no-salt-added seasoning blends
- Quesadillas with Meijer shredded reduced fat cheese and veggies
- Meijer roasted almonds
- Meijer olives
- Mixed fresh vegetables (carrots, celery, cucumbers, tomatoes, snow peas) with Meijer light Italian dressing

**craving sweet?**
- Fresh fruit, frozen fruit bars or dried fruit (raisins, apricots, cranberries, cherries)
- Meijer lowfat flavored yogurt
- No-sugar-added fruit packs
- No-sugar-added pudding or Meijer sugar free gelatin
- Fruit smoothie (fresh/frozen fruit, yogurt, juice/milk, ice)
- Sliced apples and Meijer peanut butter
- Meijer unsweetened applesauce
- Granola bars and trail mix (nuts, fruits, whole-grain cereal)
10 quick trail mixes

A fast and nutritious, no-hassle snack trail mix goes a long way to keeping you full and energized between meals. Portion control is important, so mix and place individual servings in Meijer reclosable snack bags.

cherry–pistachio crunch
Combine ½ cup dried cherries, 2 cups rice squares or wheat squares, ½ cup roasted pistachios and 3 cups lowfat granola.

go nuts
Combine 1 cup raw almonds, 1 cup walnuts, 1 cup raw cashews, 1 cup chopped dried apricots and 1 cup dried cherries.

very berry
Combine 2 cups lightly salted mixed nuts, 1 cup dried blueberries, 1 cup dried cranberries and 1 cup yogurt-covered raisins.

fluff ’n stuff
Combine 1 cup mini marshmallows, 2 cups pretzels, 2 cups toasted oatmeal squares cereal, ½ cup raisins and ½ cup chopped dried apricots.

cheese ’n apples
Combine 2 cups whole-grain Cheddar goldfish-shaped crackers, 2½ cups Cheddar-flavored mini pretzel twists, 1 cup dried apple rings and ½ cup lightly salted peanuts.

morning munch
Combine 2 cups mini shredded wheat squares cereal, 1 cup dried fruit (such as pineapple, raisins, cranberries or apricots), 1 cup nuts or seeds (such as slivered almonds, dry-roasted peanuts, toasted pumpkin seeds, walnut pieces or sunflower kernels).

sweet and salty
Combine 3 cups popcorn or kettle corn, 2 cups whole-grain goldfish crackers; 1 cup Meijer ABC pretzels and 1 cup raisins.

tropical
Combine 2 cups yogurt-covered pretzels, 2 cups honey-nut cereal, 1 cup dried tropical fruit (mix of pineapple, papaya and mango), ½ cup macadamia nuts and ½ cup unsweetened coconut flakes.

sweet chipotle crunch
Combine 1 cup pecans, 1 cup cashews, 2 tablespoons melted light butter spread, 1 tablespoon brown sugar and 2 teaspoons no-salt-added chipotle seasoning. Bake at 325°F for 15 minutes. Stir in 1 cup golden raisins.

chunky monkey
Combine 2 to 3 cups honey–wheat pretzel twists, 1 cup dried banana slices, 1 cup lightly salted peanuts, ½ cup milk chocolate chips and ½ cup peanut butter chips.
10 100-calorie snacks

Not all 100-calorie snacks are equal. Here are some tasty 100-calorie options that are loaded with the nutrients your body needs and are guaranteed to fill you up.

• ¼ of a small avocado with 6 whole-grain tortilla chips
• An orange and 2 tablespoons walnuts
• Half an apple with 2 teaspoons of peanut butter
• ½ cup of fat-free vanilla yogurt with ½ cup sliced strawberries
• 10 mini whole-grain pretzel twists and 2 (1-inch) cubes of lowfat cheese
• 6 whole-wheat crackers with two teaspoons of peanut butter
• 1 medium banana

• 10 cashew nuts or 10 almonds
• ½ cup of unsweetened applesauce with 1 slice of whole-grain cinnamon–raisin toast
• ½ cup mixed raw veggies with ¼ cup light ranch dressing

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chapter eight:
the dinner dilemma
If the dreaded “What’s for dinner?” question sends you scrambling for quick meal options, you’re not alone. With a little thought and a few helpful hints, it’s still possible to have homemade meals ready in minutes.

making dinner a priority

Gathering around the dinner table with the family is a time-honored ritual worth hanging on to. Studies show that kids who eat regularly with their families eat more nutritiously, have fewer emotional problems and do better in school. As the family schedule and homework crowd out together time, a family meal becomes even more important. So make it a priority—with our help, and some planning and foresight, it can be done.

After-school lessons, team practices and committee meetings won’t go away, of course, so you probably won’t be able to eat together every day. But make it a goal to enjoy a family meal at least three times a week.

Set a definite dinnertime.

Everyone has schedules. You need to be at work on time. Your kids have to be at their desks when the bell rings. So it makes sense to set a definite time for dinner as part of the family’s schedule.

Keep a calendar. Write down everyone’s weekly activities so you know which days you can focus on having a meal together as a family.

Make a list. Using page 46, make a list of quick, easy recipes and menus that you know your family will enjoy. To get family members involved in the process, each one could pick a favorite recipe for one of the weekly meals from meijermealbox.com or the Easy Meals, Healthy Families guide.

Stock up. Be prepared for those busy nights. Keep on hand quick-cooking sides like herbed couscous or quinoa, and easy-to-prepare fresh vegetables like baby carrots or bagged salads. Just add a Meijer deli rotisserie chicken, and you’ve prepared a balanced meal for your family in minutes.
simple solutions to dinner dilemmas

Making dinner tonight—and every night—just got a whole lot easier with these practical solutions. Here are simple answers to some of the most common suppertime situations.

I desperately need dinners that last more than one meal. How can I disguise leftovers so my family thinks it’s a brand new meal?

Every so often, cook a double batch of a recipe so that it can be easily transformed into another dish. Use meijermealbox.com for great recipes that you’d want to try doubling. Look for baked chicken breast recipes that are simple to double and then shred for chicken tacos the next day.

My kids complain that all of their friends have soda and can watch TV while eating dinner. How can I make dinnertime more appealing for them?

Make dinner a family event, with everyone taking turns hosting a talk-time theme. Put one person in charge of the conversation topics or roundtable games to get everyone talking and sharing parts of their day. The questions can range from “What was your favorite part of the day?” to “What is something new you learned today?” Come up with a nightly “drink special” for the meal. A chilled pitcher of seltzer water and a splash of Meijer 100% fruit juice garnished with a piece of fresh fruit can be a tropical surprise.

My youngest daughter is a vegetarian. How can I make sure she’s getting the nutrition she needs to grow, without having to prepare a separate meal just for her?

There are plenty of protein-rich foods that will keep her growing strong and won’t make you cook separate meals. Just double up on protein-rich vegetables, beans, soy and fish. Depending on the type of vegetarian she is, eggs or dairy may also be healthy options.

My husband insists on meat and potatoes at every meal. How do I change his mindset and help him be more of a healthy role model for our kids?

Meat and potatoes can get a bad rap. But with simple portion control he can build a balanced plate with plenty of fruits and vegetables as well. Continue to offer protein-rich foods, and use NuVal® to make smart choices with lean meats, fish and poultry. Add sweet potatoes, baby red potatoes and Meijer fat free sour cream, fat-free Greek yogurt or Meijer Naturals salsa as alternative toppings.

By the time everyone is home, homework is finished, dance is done and soccer is over, I’m too tired to cook. How can I prepare healthy, home-cooked meals when there’s only one of me to do it?

A fully stocked kitchen with the right tools and appliances is a game-changer for busy parents. Prep slow cooker recipes quickly in the morning and come home to a warm dinner that is ready to serve. Have several frozen, premade casseroles, soups and sauces ready to go. And don’t forget Meijer has ready-to-eat meals for those days when you just need a healthy break.
### Month of Quick and Healthy Dinner Menus

#### Week 1
- **MON**
  - Chicken and green bean skillet (see page 48)
  - Instant brown rice
  - Fat-free milk
  - Fresh grapes

- **TUE**
  - White chicken chili (see page 52)
  - Baked tortilla chips
  - Tossed green salad
  - Lowfat dressing
  - Tangerine

- **WED**
  - Layered rigatoni bake*
  - Tossed green salad
  - Lowfat dressing
  - Whole-wheat roll
  - Pineapple chunks

- **THU**
  - Tilapia fillet pan-fried with olive oil spray
  - Sautéed spinach and garlic sprinkled with Parmesan
  - Quick brown rice
  - Diced mango

- **FRI**
  - Grilled chicken breast
  - Corn on the cob
  - Apple-cabbage slaw*
  - Fat-free milk

#### Week 2
- **MON**
  - Tomato-cheese ravioli soup (see page 53)
  - Baked garlic breadstick
  - Small pear

- **TUE**
  - Baked salmon fillets marinated in orange juice
  - Red potatoes
  - Asparagus spears
  - Whole-grain baguette
  - Peach slices

- **WED**
  - Grilled 96% lean hamburger on whole-grain bun
  - Toppings: lettuce, tomato, red onion
  - Melon

- **THU**
  - Baked lemon salmon (see page 48)
  - Instant brown rice
  - Frozen yogurt topped with sliced strawberries

- **FRI**
  - Easy lasagna (see page 50)
  - Green beans
  - Soft garlic breadstick
  - Kiwi slices

#### Week 3
- **MON**
  - Grilled sirloin steak topped with salsa
  - Broccoli florets
  - Whole-wheat dinner roll with trans fat-free margarine
  - Watermelon chunks

- **TUE**
  - Grilled chicken breast
  - Whole-grain couscous with broccoli florets
  - Fat-free milk
  - Papaya chunks

- **WED**
  - Creamy chicken-spinach soup*
  - Whole-wheat bread with trans fat-free margarine
  - Fresh grapes

- **THU**
  - Roast beef and blue cheese salad (see page 50)
  - Whole-grain baguette
  - Fat-free milk
  - Pear

- **FRI**
  - Greek pasta with tomatoes, spinach and beans (see page 53)
  - Fat-free milk
  - Sliced apples

#### Week 4
- **MON**
  - Mushroom pizza on whole-wheat crust
  - Carrot sticks
  - Celery sticks
  - Grape tomatoes
  - Frozen yogurt
  - Honeydew melon chunks

- **TUE**
  - Grilled center-cut pork loin chop
  - Asparagus spears
  - Whole-wheat couscous
  - Fat-free milk
  - Plum

- **WED**
  - Baked Southwestern tilapia (see page 55)
  - Sautéed squash
  - Small baked red potato with lowfat sour cream
  - Blackberries

- **THU**
  - Family-friendly spaghetti (see page 53)
  - Whole green beans
  - Clementine

- **FRI**
  - Baked chicken breast topped with sautéed onions
  - Wild rice
  - Peas and carrots

*Find these recipes on meijermealbox.com.*
the ultimate time-saver

Shop once, cook once. With these time-saving solutions, you’ll do half the work for twice the number of healthy meals and side dishes.

- **Double it.** When boiling pasta, or cooking rice or other grains, simply double the amount. Use half for dinner and refrigerate or freeze the rest for a quick meal later.

- **Big batch your weekend.** Make a large casserole, lasagna, meatloaf, big-batch soup, sauce or chili to be frozen and reheated to enjoy later. Freeze in individual containers for easy grab-and-go meals.

- **Prebake.** Bake sweet and regular potatoes then refrigerate. Wrap with a paper towel and microwave for a delicious side that only takes minutes to reheat.

- **Slow cookers work.** For an easy meal, toss in all ingredients in the morning, and by dinnertime you’ll have a warm, savory dinner ready to eat.

- **Let Meijer cook.** Meijer has nutritious prepared options ready to go. Pick up a hot rotisserie chicken and serve with a bagged side salad with pear slices for a healthy meal made easy.
baked lemon salmon

4 (4 oz.) salmon fillets
1 tbsp. Meijer classic olive oil
1 lemon, zested and juiced
2 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley

1 Select 4 (4 ounce) salmon fillets.
2 Place fillets in a baking pan coated with nonstick cooking spray; season with salt and pepper to taste. Drizzle fillets with oil and lemon juice; sprinkle with lemon zest.
3 Preheat oven to 450°F. Bake 10 minutes per inch of thickness or until fish turns from glassy to opaque. Sprinkle with parsley, and serve.

serves 4

Per serving: 190 calories, 10g fat, 60mg cholesterol, 50mg sodium, 1g carbohydrate, 0.5g fiber, 21g protein

chicken and green bean skillet

4 (4 oz.) Meijer boneless, skinless chicken breasts
2 cups Meijer frozen green beans
1 (10¾ oz.) can lowfat cream of mushroom soup
¼ tsp. dried thyme
1 cup shredded Meijer 2% sharp Cheddar

1 Coat a large nonstick skillet with nonstick cooking spray and place over medium-high heat. Add chicken; cook, covered, 5 to 7 minutes per side or until an instant-read thermometer registers 165°F. Transfer chicken to a plate; set aside.
2 Return skillet to medium heat. Add green beans, soup, thyme and ½ cup water; stir to combine. Cook, covered, 6 minutes, stirring often.
3 Return chicken to skillet; cook 1 minute or until hot. Top with cheese, and serve.

serves 4

Per serving: 270 calories, 10g fat, 90mg cholesterol, 580mg sodium, 12g carbohydrate, 2g fiber, 33g protein
peppered pork roast

1 (4-lb.) Meijer pork loin roast
6 tbsp. no-salt-added pepper blend seasoning

Preheat oven to 350°F. Rub pork roast evenly with seasoning. Place pork in a shallow roasting pan. Roast 45 minutes to 1 hour and 15 minutes or until an instant-read thermometer registers 145°F. Remove from oven and let stand 10 minutes. Thinly slice pork, and serve. Wrap and refrigerate leftovers for Caesar Pork Sandwiches.

makes 16 to 18 (3 ounce) servings

Per serving: 160 calories, 7g fat, 60mg cholesterol, 50mg sodium, 0g carbohydrate, 0g fiber, 22g protein

Recipe adapted from the National Pork Board®, PorkBeInspired.com

Caesar pork sandwiches

3 cups chopped romaine lettuce
½ cup light Caesar salad dressing
¼ cup shredded Parmesan
1 (8 to 10-inch) round loaf focaccia bread
¾ lb. leftover sliced pork from Peppered Pork Roast

In a medium bowl combine lettuce with dressing and Parmesan; set aside. Slice focaccia horizontally, and cut into 4 wedges. Layer pork slices evenly on bottom half of focaccia. Top evenly with lettuce mixture. Place top halves of focaccia over lettuce to close sandwiches, and serve.

serves 4

Per serving: 330 calories, 9g fat, 70mg cholesterol, 680mg sodium, 35g carbohydrate, 2g fiber, 33 g protein

Recipe adapted from the National Pork Board®, PorkBeInspired.com
**quick roast beef and blue cheese salad**

8 cups packed spring mixed salad greens  
8 oz. thinly sliced, well-trimmed deli roast beef  
20 grape tomatoes  
¼ cup Meijer Organics blue crumbled cheese  
½ cup lowfat balsamic or raspberry vinaigrette

**serves 4**  
Per serving: 170 calories, 7g fat, 5mg cholesterol, 580mg sodium, 13g carbohydrate, 3g fiber, 15g protein

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**easy lasagna**

1 lb. Certified Angus Beef® lean ground beef  
1 (24 to 30 oz.) jar Meijer Organics tomato basil pasta sauce  
1 (14.5 oz.) can Italian diced tomatoes, drained  
⅛ tsp. Meijer Organics crushed red pepper flakes  
10 uncooked Meijer lasagna noodles  
1 (15 oz.) carton Meijer low fat ricotta cheese  
¼ cup Meijer Parmesan  
1 Meijer egg  
2 cups shredded part-skim mozzarella, divided

**serves 12**  
Per serving: 330 calories, 9g fat, 49mg cholesterol, 670mg sodium, 34g carbohydrate, 2g fiber, 26g protein

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**Cooking Light**
Mediterranean pasta with zucchini and tomato

- 8 oz. Meijer multigrain extra penne rigate pasta, uncooked
- 1 (14.5 oz.) can diced tomatoes with basil, garlic and oregano
- 1 (15 oz.) can Meijer chick peas, rinsed and drained
- 1 medium zucchini, sliced
- 2 tbsp. sliced ripe olives

1. Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain; keep warm.
2. Meanwhile, for the sauce, in a large skillet combine tomatoes, chick peas, zucchini and olives. Place skillet over medium-high heat; bring to boiling. Reduce heat to low; simmer, uncovered, 5 minutes.
3. Spoon sauce over pasta; toss to combine, and serve.

makes 4 (2-cup) servings

Per serving: 363 calories, 4g fat, 0mg cholesterol, 460mg sodium, 65g carbohydrate, 3g fiber, 17g protein

Hawaiian chicken kabobs

- 4 (3 oz.) Meijer boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1½-inch chunks
- 12 (1½-inch) pieces red onion
- 12 grape tomatoes
- 12 (1½-inch) pieces yellow or red bell pepper
- 12 fresh pineapple chunks
- 2 tbsp. Meijer balsamic vinegar
- 2 tbsp. Meijer classic olive oil

1. Preheat grill to medium (300°F to 350°F).
2. Alternately thread chicken, onion, tomatoes, bell pepper and pineapple onto skewers.* Brush skewers evenly with vinegar and oil.
3. Grill skewers 10 minutes or until an instant-read thermometer inserted into chicken reaches 165°F, turning occasionally.

serves 4

Per serving: 200 calories, 5g fat, 45mg cholesterol, 75mg sodium, 12g carbohydrate, 3g fiber, 24g protein

*If using wooden skewers, soak in water at least 30 minutes before grilling to prevent burning.
Greek chicken salad
Top 1 1/2 cups salad greens with 3 ounces shredded chicken, 1 Roma tomato cut into wedges, 1/4 cup Greek olives, 1/4 cup crumbled feta and 2 tablespoons sliced green onions. Serve with 2 tablespoons light balsamic vinaigrette.

chicken and artichoke pizza
Spread prepared pizza shell or crust with 1 (14 ounce) can chopped artichokes mixed with 1/2 cup light mayonnaise, 1/4 tsp. hot sauce and 1/4 cup Parmesan. Top with 1 1/2 cups shredded chicken, 1/2 cup chopped red bell pepper, 1/4 cup Parmesan and 2 tablespoons pine nuts. Bake at 400°F for 10 to 12 minutes.

white chicken chili
In a large pot, sauté 2 cups shredded chicken in 1 tablespoon olive oil. Add 1 (48 ounce) jar white beans, 1 to 2 tablespoons cumin and 1 1/2 cups salsa. When hot, add 2 cups lowfat shredded Monterey Jack cheese and stir until melted.

whole-grain chicken wrap
Spread 3 tablespoons guacamole on 1 whole-grain tortilla. Top with 1/2 cup lowfat shredded chicken, 2 tablespoons lowfat shredded Cheddar, tomato slices and shredded romaine lettuce. Wrap tightly; cut on a diagonal.

black bean and chicken quesadillas
Mix 1/2 cup shredded chicken with a pinch of cumin and spread on half of 1 whole-grain tortilla. Top with 1/2 cup drained and rinsed canned black beans, and 1/2 cup lowfat shredded Cheddar. Fold and cook 5 minutes in a nonstick skillet, turning once. Cut into wedges, and top with diced tomatoes, salsa and lowfat sour cream.

quick chicken pot pie
Combine 2 cups cubed chicken with 1 can lowfat or fat-free/low-sodium cream of chicken soup, 1/2 cup lowfat milk and 1 (12 ounce) package frozen mixed vegetables, thawed. Pour into an 8-x8-inch pan. Combine 1/2 cup lowfat milk and 1 egg with 1 cup biscuit baking mix. Spread over chicken mixture. Bake at 400°F for 30 minutes.

chicken curry salad in wheat pita
Blend 1/4 cup plain Greek yogurt, 1/4 cup light mayonnaise and 2 teaspoons curry powder. Add to 2 cups chopped chicken combined with 1/4 cup raisins, 1/4 cup sliced almonds, 1 chopped apple and 2 chopped celery stalks. Use to fill 1 whole-wheat pita bread.

chicken and vegetable stir-fry
Stir-fry 1 (16 ounce) package frozen Asian vegetables in 1/2 cup bottled stir-fry sauce until crisp-tender. Add 2 cups chopped chicken. Serve over 3/4 cup instant brown rice and top with 1 tablespoon chopped peanuts.

chicken Caesar salad
Top romaine salad with 1/2 cup shredded chicken. Add seasoned croutons, 1/4 cup shredded Parmesan and 2 tablespoons light Caesar dressing.

chicken burrito
Spread 1 cup vegetarian refried beans down the center of 1 whole-wheat tortilla. Top with 2 tablespoons shredded lowfat Colby Jack cheese and 1/2 cup shredded chicken; microwave to melt cheese. Top with shredded lettuce, diced tomatoes, salsa and light sour cream.
**tortellini pasta salad**
Cook 1 (19 ounce) bag frozen cheese tortellini. Add 1 (16 ounce) bag thawed frozen fiesta-style vegetables. Stir in ½ bottle light Italian dressing.

**light Alfredo with pasta and vegetables**
Cook 1 (1-pound) box whole-wheat pasta. Prepare lowfat Alfredo sauce mix as directed. Combine pasta with sauce, and add 1 cup frozen peas and ½ cup cubed Meijer low sodium deli ham.

**Greek pasta with tomatoes, spinach and beans**
Cook 8 ounces multi-grain penne. In a nonstick skillet combine 2 (14.5 ounce) cans Italian-style diced tomatoes and 1 (19 ounce) can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed; simmer 10 minutes. Add 10 ounces fresh baby spinach; stir until wilted. Spoon over pasta and sprinkle with ½ cup crumbled feta.

**ravioli “lasagna”**
Spoon one-third of 1 (26 ounce) jar pasta sauce into a large baking dish. Arrange 20 cheese ravioli over sauce. Layer with ½ (10 ounce) box frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained, ½ cup lowfat shredded mozzarella and ½ cup grated Parmesan. Repeat layers. Bake at 350°F for 40 minutes.

**tomato–cheese ravioli soup**
Combine 1 (14.5 ounce) can stewed tomatoes, 1 (14.25 ounce) can low-sodium chicken broth and ½ teaspoon Italian seasoning; simmer 5 minutes. Add 3 cups frozen cheese ravioli, 1 small sliced zucchini and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Boil; then simmer 8 minutes.

**Italian sausage pasta**
Cook 1 (1-pound) box fettuccine. In a skillet cook 2 tablespoons olive oil, 1 sliced red onion, 4 sliced Italian turkey sausage links, 1 pint cherry tomatoes and 2 cups spinach. Add pasta and ¼ cup Parmesan.

**10 ways to use your noodle**

**beef and asparagus pasta toss**
Cook 3 cups rotini pasta. In a nonstick skillet combine 2 tablespoons olive oil, ¼ cup shallots and 2 chopped garlic cloves; cook 3 minutes. Add 1 pound Certified Angus Beef® lean ground beef; cook until no longer pink. Add pasta and 1 pound chopped steamed asparagus.

**family-friendly spaghetti**
Cook 1 (1-pound) box whole-wheat spaghetti. Combine 1 (26 ounce) jar tomato–basil pasta sauce with 1 pound cooked 96% lean ground turkey breast. Add pasta to sauce and top with 2 tablespoons Parmesan.

**vegetable and pasta salad**
Cook 1 (1-pound) box penne. Add 6 chopped medium tomatoes, 8 ounces cubed fresh mozzarella and 1 cup fresh baby spinach. Drizzle with 2 tablespoons olive oil and toss 1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar to coat.

**simple salmon pasta**
Cook 8 ounces whole-wheat penne. Combine with 1 can red salmon, ¼ cup toasted pine nuts, 2 tablespoons olive oil, 1 tablespoon lemon juice and 3 cups arugula.
**broccoli and beef baked potato**
Bake 4 russet potatoes. Cook 1 pound ground beef; drain. Add 1 cup cooked broccoli florets and 1 cup lowfat shredded Cheddar; heat through. Spoon evenly over potatoes.

**beef taco salad**
Cook 1 pound ground beef. Stir in ¼ cup water, 2 tablespoons chili powder and 2 teaspoons cumin. Layer 1 bag romaine salad, beef mixture, 1 cup diced tomato, ½ cup canned drained and rinsed black beans, ½ cup corn, ½ cup lowfat shredded cheddar and ½ cup lowfat ranch dressing.

**easy beef and bean chili**
Cook 1 pound ground beef. Add 2 cans diced tomatoes with peppers and onions, and 2 cans chili-seasoned kidney beans. Simmer 10 to 15 minutes.

**Swedish cabbage soup with meatballs**
In a large pot sauté 1 head chopped cabbage in 1 tablespoon olive oil; simmer 15 minutes. Add 8 cups low-sodium, fat-free chicken broth and 2 bay leaves; simmer 10 minutes. Shape ½ pound seasoned ground beef into meatballs. Add to soup; simmer 10 minutes until beef is cooked.

**spicy chipotle burgers**
Mix 2 tablespoons chipotle chilies in adobo, 1 pound ground beef and ½ cup minced onion. Form into 4 patties. Grill over medium-high heat. Place on whole-wheat buns with lettuce and sliced tomato.

**meatloaf**
Combine 1½ pounds ground beef with ¾ cup rolled oats, ¾ cup chopped onion, ½ cup chili sauce or ketchup, 1 egg and 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce. Shape into a loaf. Bake at 350°F for 1 hour.

**Mediterranean beef pita pocket**
Cook 1 pound ground beef with 1 chopped red bell pepper; drain. Add 4 cups chopped romaine, ½ cup crumbled feta, ½ cup plain fat-free yogurt and ¼ cup chopped black olives. Spoon into whole-wheat pita pockets.

**Asian Salisbury steak**
Mix 1 pound ground beef, ¾ cup diced red bell pepper, ¾ cup chopped green onions, ½ cup breadcrumbs, 3 tablespoons hoisin sauce and 2 tablespoons minced ginger. Form into 4 patties. Broil 4 minutes per side.

**harvest beef soup**
In a large pot cook 1 pound ground beef with 1 onion; drain. Stir in 2 (14.5 ounce) cans diced seasoned tomatoes, 2 (15 ounce) cans low-sodium beef broth and 1 cup each diced potato, celery and carrots; simmer 30 minutes.

Recipe note: Use 95% lean ground beef to create any of these delicious recipes.
baked lemon catfish
Brush 4 (6 ounce) catfish fillets with ¼ cup melted butter, 1 tablespoon lemon juice and ½ teaspoon lemon–pepper seasoning. Bake at 450°F for 10 minutes.

blackened citrus salmon
Brush 4 (6 ounce) salmon fillets with ¼ cup melted butter, 2 tablespoons orange juice, 1 teaspoon orange zest and 2 teaspoons blackening seasoning. Bake at 450°F for 10 minutes.

lemon–dill salmon
Sprinkle 4 (6 ounce) salmon fillets with ¼ teaspoon garlic pepper. Broil on “high” 5 minutes. Combine 2 tablespoons chopped dill, 1 teaspoon lemon zest, 1 tablespoon lemon juice and 1 chopped garlic clove. Spread over fillets. Broil 3 minutes more.

crispy baked cod
Combine ¼ cup breadcrumbs, 2 chopped garlic cloves, ¼ cup finely chopped black olives, 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning and 2 teaspoons lemon zest. Drizzle 4 (4 ounce) cod fillets with 3 tablespoons lemon juice and brush with 2 tablespoons light mayonnaise. Top with breadcrumb mixture. Bake at 450°F for 10 minutes.

Italian baked salmon
Brush 4 (6 ounce) salmon fillets with 2 tablespoons olive oil, 1 teaspoon oregano, ¼ teaspoon garlic powder and ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes. Bake at 450°F for 10 minutes.

baked cilantro–lime trout
Combine 3 tablespoons lime juice and 2 tablespoons olive oil. Brush over 4 (8 ounce) rainbow trout fillets. Sprinkle with 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro. Bake at 450°F for 10 minutes.

sesame salmon
Season 4 (6 ounce) salmon fillets with pepper to taste. Brush with 2 teaspoons sesame oil and 1 tablespoon soy sauce. Bake at 450°F for 10 minutes.

broiled Jamaican mahi
Combine 2 tablespoons honey, 1 tablespoon olive oil and ¼ teaspoon lime zest. Brush over 4 (6 ounce) mahi mahi fillets. Sprinkle with 2 tablespoons jerk seasoning. Broil on “high” 8 minutes.

baked Southwestern tilapia
Combine 1 tablespoon brown sugar, 1 teaspoon Mexican chili powder, ½ teaspoon lime zest and ¼ teaspoon onion salt. Rub over 4 (6 ounce) tilapia fillets. Bake at 450°F for 10 minutes.

10 fast fish fixes

Seafood 1-2-3
Visit your local Meijer for additional easy Seafood 1-2-3 recipes and more.
mango–blueberry cup
Combine 1 large diced mango, 1 cup blueberries, 1 tablespoon lime juice and 1 tablespoon sugar. Divide into 4 glasses. Top each with ¼ cup lowfat vanilla yogurt and ¼ cup toasted coconut.

peach brulée
Place 3 slices no-sugar-added canned peaches into ramekins. Mix ¼ cup packed brown sugar with ¼ cup sliced almonds and spoon over peaches. Broil 2 to 4 minutes until top is melted and slightly charred.

blackberry–cherry cobbler
Cook 1 (21 ounce) can cherry pie filling, 2 cups frozen blackberries and ¼ teaspoon cinnamon until bubbly. Pour into a baking dish. Dip 1 (7.5 ounce) package buttermilk biscuits into 3 tablespoons melted butter, then dip into mix of ½ cup sugar and ¼ teaspoon cinnamon. Place biscuits over fruit. Bake at 350°F for 25 minutes.

fruity frozen yogurt
Process 1 sliced frozen banana, ½ cup plain lowfat yogurt, and 1 teaspoon honey in a food processor until almost smooth. Add favorite frozen fruit; process until fruit is smooth.

grilled peaches with berry sauce
Purée 5 ounces thawed berries and 1½ teaspoons lemon juice; strain. Sprinkle 4 fresh peach halves with 5 teaspoons brown sugar and ¼ teaspoon cinnamon. Drizzle with ½ teaspoon vanilla; dot with butter or margarine. Wrap in foil; grill until peaches are softened. Spoon berry sauce over peaches.

dark chocolate bark
Melt 1 bar dark chocolate and spread on parchment paper. Sprinkle with healthy favorites like tart cherries, raisins, nuts or sunflower seeds. Refrigerate 5 minutes; then break chocolate into small pieces.

chocolate-dipped frozen banana bites
Freeze 2 bananas cut into bite-size chunks. Melt 8 ounces dark chocolate in a microwave, stirring every 20 seconds. Dip frozen bananas in chocolate, then roll in toppings like toasted coconut or chopped nuts. Freeze until set.

mini ice cream sandwiches
Place 1 small scoop of light vanilla ice cream or frozen lowfat yogurt between two vanilla wafers. Roll sandwich in finely chopped dark or bittersweet chocolate.

Greek yogurt with oranges and mint
Stir 1½ teaspoons honey into 6 tablespoons fat-free Greek plain yogurt. Spoon yogurt over 1 peeled and sectioned orange. Top with 4 chopped mint leaves.

cherries with ricotta and toasted almonds
Mix ¾ cup frozen, pitted cherries with 1 teaspoon sugar and 1 teaspoon lemon juice. Microwave 1 to 2 minutes. Mix 2 tablespoons part-skim ricotta with 1 teaspoon vanilla. Top cherries with ricotta and sprinkle with 1 tablespoon toasted slivered almonds.
chapter nine:
special dietary concerns
Did you know that nearly two-thirds of Americans are overweight or obese? Maintaining a healthy weight can decrease your risk for a number of health issues, including diabetes, heart disease, certain cancers and osteoarthritis. There are many ways to actively ensure that you reach and maintain a healthy weight.

weight management

When you maintain a healthy body weight, you feel better. You move more freely, have less knee and joint pain, and have more energy. Choosing health and making an effort to maintain a healthy weight can encourage your family to follow in your footsteps.

One way to check your progress is to track your Body Mass Index (BMI). BMI is a measure to estimate healthy weight range. A BMI of 18.5 to 24.9 is considered normal weight, 25 to 29.9 is overweight, and a BMI of 30 or greater indicates obesity. If you have a lot of weight to lose, don’t get discouraged; keep in mind the many health benefits from even small amounts of weight loss. Every Meijer Pharmacy offers free BMI screenings to help you reach your goal. For an easy-to-use, online BMI calculator, visit cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/.

learn proper portions

Learning proper portions is vital for successful weight management and even loss. When you don’t have measuring cups or food scales at your disposal, one way to size up portions is to compare the amounts with the sizes of common objects. Use these comparisons to help you visualize your portions and keep them in check.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>vegetables</th>
<th>lean protein</th>
<th>pasta</th>
<th>pancake</th>
<th>cheese</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 cup = baseball</td>
<td>3 ounces = deck of cards</td>
<td>½ cup = tennis ball</td>
<td>4-inch compact disc</td>
<td>1½ ounces = 4 standard dice</td>
<td>1 tablespoon = thumb tip</td>
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tips for successful weight loss

Use MyPlate guidelines to fill your plate with healthy choices. (See page 20 for helpful guidelines.)

- Learn what a proper portion size looks like by measuring and weighing your foods. Doing this will train your eyes to recognize healthy portions.
- Don’t skip meals, and do keep low-calorie snacks on hand.
- Limit alcohol. While the occasional cocktail won’t pack on the pounds, try lower-calorie “mocktails.”
- Be active. Simple exercises such as walking regularly can help get you started. Always talk to your healthcare provider before starting an exercise program. And don’t forget, Meijer has everything you need to exercise: fitness equipment, apparel and quality athletic shoes.
- Burn 100 extra calories each day and potentially lose 10 pounds in a year without dieting. It’s as easy as walking or gardening for just 20 minutes.

Please consult your physician or healthcare provider with any health-related concerns, including changing your diet or starting an exercise routine. The information in this publication should never replace your doctor’s advice or care.

58 meijer easy meals healthy families
If you are living with diabetes, or pre-diabetes, you are not alone. Today more than 25 million Americans are living with one of three types of diabetes (type 1, type 2 and gestational), and many more are at risk. Though each type is unique, they all share the same characteristic: high blood sugar (glucose) levels due to the body’s inability to produce or use insulin.

**diabetes**

“Create Your Plate” is a fast, effective way to choose the foods you want to eat, while allowing yourself to manage blood glucose levels and portion sizes. Plan healthy meals by filling half the plate with non-starchy vegetables (e.g. spinach, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, green beans, tomatoes, cabbage). Fill one-fourth of the plate with protein (lean meat, fish, poultry, soy or legumes), and fill one-fourth with whole grains or starchy vegetables (potato, corn, peas, squash, beans, whole grain rice, bread, pasta). Include a lowfat or fat-free dairy or soymilk choice, and add 1 piece of fruit.

Carbohydrates affect blood glucose levels the most. Here are some guidelines to follow:

- Carbohydrate intake should not fall below 130 grams per day.
- In general, women should have no more than 45 to 60 grams of carbohydrates per meal.
- In general, men should have no more than 60 to 75 grams of carbohydrates per meal.
- About 15 grams of carbohydrates is suggested for snacks.

**using NuVal® for diabetes**

NuVal® is a useful resource for people with diabetes. Higher NuVal® Scores identify high-fiber and low-glycemic foods for better blood sugar control. However, it is still important to consider total carbohydrate amount per serving on the food label for personal meal planning.

**Meijer Pharmacy: every Meijer store has a specially trained diabetes care pharmacist**

If you have questions about the prevention of type 2 diabetes or the management of diabetes, the Meijer Specially Trained Diabetes Care Pharmacist is a good resource.
Considering one in three Americans is afflicted with some type of cardiovascular disease, making it the leading cause of death for men and women, there’s no time like the present to get heart healthy.

heart disease

What is heart disease? Most heart disease is a result of blocked arteries or atherosclerosis. This can lead to chest pain, shortness of breath, and even heart attack or stroke.

What causes plaque buildup? Though heredity is a factor in heart disease, poor eating habits, stress, smoking and a sedentary lifestyle contribute to high blood pressure, elevated blood cholesterol and high blood sugar. These can cause chronic inflammation, which can lead to blocked arteries.

What can be done to prevent heart disease? Making lifestyle choices that lower blood pressure and blood sugar, and reduce inflammation in the body is key.

eat for your heart’s sake

Eating for heart health doesn’t have to be boring. Many of your favorite foods and recipes can be adjusted to make them more heart healthy. Improving your diet can be as simple as adding whole grains, using olive oil, and eating more fruits and vegetables. Here are some other ways:

Sip green tea. Loaded with antioxidants, green tea helps fight inflammation. Studies suggest it can lower bad cholesterol, increase good cholesterol and improve artery function.

Indulge in chocolate (in moderation). Dark chocolate contains heart-healthy flavonoids, antioxidants and minerals. It has been found to reduce blood pressure and lower cholesterol.

Limit salt. Add anti-inflammatory herbs and spices, such as curry, garlic, ginger and turmeric, instead of salt, for more flavor and less sodium.

Please consult your physician or healthcare provider with any health-related concerns, including changing your diet or starting an exercise routine. The information in this publication should never replace your doctor’s advice or care.

60 meijer easy meals healthy families
More and more families are being encouraged by their doctors to go “gluten-free” by avoiding foods that contain the protein gluten. Some people have a sensitivity to gluten, which can come in the form of gluten allergies, gluten intolerance and celiac disease.

celiac disease

Gluten is a protein found in common grains such as wheat, rye and barley. Consuming even small amounts of gluten can cause a wide range of health problems including intestinal issues, joint pain and weight loss. Specifically for those with celiac disease, gluten can impair the function of the small intestine, preventing the absorption of nutrients into the bloodstream. A lifelong gluten-free diet is the only way to prevent these conditions. Keep these tips in mind when becoming a gluten-free family:

• **Focus on what you can eat, rather than what you can’t.** At first, eliminating foods containing wheat, rye, barley and other gluten-containing grains from your diet might make you feel like you are being deprived of your favorite foods, but there are many delicious gluten-free foods you can enjoy. So focus on what you can eat.

• **Enjoy gluten-free grains.** You can still enjoy nutritious whole grains and remain gluten-free. Whole grains that do not naturally contain gluten include amaranth, buckwheat, corn, millet, Montina™ (Indian ricegrass), quinoa, rice (both brown and colored rice), sorghum, teff and wild rice.

• **Focus meals on naturally gluten-free foods.** Fruits, vegetables, unprocessed meats, seafood and dairy products are naturally gluten-free. (Preseasoned meat and seafood products may contain gluten, so be sure to check the label.)

• **Avoid cross-contamination.** Wheat flour can remain in the air for 24 to 36 hours, potentially contaminating cooking surfaces. Using the same cutting board to slice gluten-containing bread and gluten-free bread can cause cross-contamination. Thoroughly scrub all cooking utensils and cooking surfaces before preparing gluten-free foods if you have gluten-containing foods in the same kitchen.

shopping for gluten-free foods at Meijer

When shopping at Meijer, look for the blue and white Gluten Free “GF” logo on Meijer brand products to easily identify gluten-free store items. More and more Meijer products carry the Gluten Free logo, but it will not be on foods that are naturally gluten-free. If you do not see a Gluten Free logo, be sure to check the ingredient list.

Also visit meijermealbox.com/healthy-living for an extensive Meijer brand gluten-free product list, as well as a gluten-free resource page.
chapter ten:
resources
and solutions
The Meijer Healthy Living Advisors accessed these quality sources for the Easy Meals, Healthy Families book.

selected sources for healthy living

- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (formerly American Dietetic Association): eatright.org
- American Diabetes Association® (ADA): diabetes.org
- ADA Create Your Plate: diabetes.org/food-and-fitness/food/planning-meals/create-your-plate
- American Heart Association®: heart.org
- Body Mass Index (BMI) calculator: cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): cdc.gov
- CDC Guide to Healthy Portions: cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating/portion_size.html
- Celiac Sprue Association®: csaceliacs.info
- COOKING LIGHT is a registered trademark of Time Inc. Lifestyle Group and is used under license.
- Dietary Guidelines for Americans: dietaryguidelines.gov
- Dietitian-planned weekly menus and recipes: meijermealbox.com/healthy-living
- Federal Food Safety Information: foodsafety.gov
- Mealtime.org: mealtime.org
- National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse (NDDIC): digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/celiac
- National Heart Lung and Blood Institute: nhlbi.nih.gov
- NuVal®: nuval.com
- USDA Choose My Plate Food Guide: choosemyplate.gov
- PubMed Health: ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001280
- US Department of Health & Human Services: healthfinder.gov
- Whole Grains Council: wholegrainscouncil.org
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# Weekly Meal Planner

**Meijer**

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Introducing *Easy Meals, Healthy Families*—the ultimate guide to planning and preparing simply delicious and nutritious dishes.

**Features:**
- 10 information-packed chapters
- Over 180 recipe and meal ideas
- Pages of health-boosting tips
- Reusable weekly meal planner and shopping list
- Dozens of time- and money-saving ideas