



IN THIS ISSUE

- Grocery Shopping for Good Health
- Recipes of the Month
- Product of the Month

What's Happening this Month:

- * Make sure to download the Baritastic app and join using our Capital Health code (76777). Use the app to log your food and get recommendations from your dietitian, be reminded of program events and updates, and access recipes!
- * Our February Support Group for post-weight loss surgery patients is Tuesday, February 16 from 6 - 7 p.m. This support group will be held virtually, so please check our online support group for the link to access, or message the dietitian at tbalestrieri@capitalhealth.org to receive the link.
- * If you had surgery and are not a member of our Post-Op Online Support Group, the Capital Health D.R.E.A.M. Team, please e-mail Theresa at tbalestrieri@capitalhealth.org so she can e-mail you the link and accept your request. This is a great way to obtain support from our program and other post-op patients in our program right at your fingertips, 24/7!
- * Is someone in your life thinking about weight loss surgery? Bring them to Dr. Chung's information session on Wednesday, February 24 from 6 - 7 p.m. To register, call our office to speak to Amy at 609.537.6777.
- * For individuals interested in weight loss without surgery, or for bariatric patients experiencing weight regain, try our Medical Weight Loss Program, featuring great tasting Robard's New Direction Products! Weekly visits with our dietitians help you develop skills to lose weight (and keep it off) and customize the meal replacement plan to meet your needs! Call our office at 609.537.6777 to schedule your first appointment with Dr. Anwar.

PREPPING FOR SUCCESS

by Elizabeth George and Theresa Balestrieri, Dietitians at Capital Health Metabolic & Weight Loss Center

Going grocery shopping and cooking meals regularly can often feel like chores that we want to avoid. Instead of thinking of these things as mundane tasks, try changing your mindset and look at them as investments in your good health. There are many ways to invest in your health—such as going to the gym or meditating—but planning your meals and snacks for the week ahead and preparing your grocery list can become things to look forward to if you choose recipes that you are excited to try!

Walking into a grocery store unprepared can be daunting, which is why we came up with some guidelines to help alleviate the burden. Remember, grocery shopping regularly is a skill that improves and becomes more efficient over time if you practice these tips.

continued on page 2





HAVE A PLAN

The grocery store is full of tempting items that are purposefully placed to grab our attention. If you wander around the store without a plan, it is easy to place these impulse items in your cart without thinking about it. Going into the store with a list can help prevent spontaneous buys, make it easier to stick with the foods you know you need throughout the week, and as an added bonus, help you stick to your budget!

Figuring out what to put on your grocery list can be a challenge. Before going to the grocery store, take stock of what you already have at home. Do you need more staple foods, like vegetables, whole grains, fruits, and protein? How much food do you need to buy to last throughout the coming week? Are there any special occasions coming up that you need to shop for?



WHAT TO INCLUDE

On your grocery store list, make sure to have foods from each food group. Variety is the spice of life and also the basis of a nutritious diet!

When picking **grains** to include on your list, try to choose whole grain options, such as whole wheat breads, quinoa, whole wheat pasta, brown rice, and oatmeal.

Vegetables come in all different colors and provide us with many different vitamins and minerals. Try to include a few different ones on your shopping trip to help create a balanced diet. Fresh and frozen veggies are both great options for cooking and snacking!

- Pre-cut frozen veggies, like riced vegetables and steamable bags, will save you time during the busy work week. If you keep them stocked in your freezer, you will always be ready for when you don't have the time to wash, chop, and cook.
- Prep your fresh vegetables in advance of the night that you're planning to cook them. Whether you are chopping, spiralizing, or slicing them, that saves time for your already busy week night. Once prepped, place them in sealable, reusable bags or containers. You may want to label them with dates or identify which recipes they are for. Suggested seasonal vegetable include broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, fennel, kale, leeks, parsnips, radishes, turnips, winter squash, and beets.

Fruits can be a refreshing and sweet cure for the winter blues. Favorites like grapefruit, lemons, oranges, Clementines, tangerines, pineapple, pears, and pomegranates can provide us with an extra boost of vitamin C during the cold and flu season. So instead of finishing your meal with a sugary snack, try some fruit instead. You can even make fruit part of your meal by creating something as simple as a kale and orange salad.



PREPPING FOR SUCCESS *continued*



FRESH, FROZEN, AND CANNED – MIX IT UP!

Looking into your fridge and seeing your fresh fruits and vegetables going bad is a frustrating sight many of us are familiar with. You can help reduce your food waste by following these tips.

- ... Make a plan for meals for the week so you can assure that you are only buying what you need.
- ... If you are trying to stock up when you shop, buy frozen and canned vegetables. Frozen vegetables provide the same vitamins, minerals, and fiber as fresh veggies without added salt. Canned vegetables can be great additions to meals, but be sure to look for “low sodium” on the label. If you can’t find low-sodium varieties, just give them a rinse before adding to your dish or plate!
- ... Limit the “snacky” foods in your home and on your grocery list, as fresh produce tends to fall to the way side when temptations like chips are around.



PLAN YOUR MEALS FOR THE WEEK

For each of your three meals (and one or two snacks per day), consider the plate method to help you plan what to eat. Next, simply add what you need to your grocery list to make those meals and snack options available. For meals, think about the protein, fruit, vegetable and starch options you need. Then do the same for snacks, which should include a little protein paired with one of the other food groups.



Look for recipes that interest you and plan what days you will have those meals. Consider choosing meals that you can make ahead or freeze after cooking for an easy meal option in a week or two (see recipes of the month for ideas!).

You can also look at the number of servings per recipe and consider making double! This is a great way to ensure you have leftovers to serve as lunches and minimize additional days of meal prep. A food scale, measuring cups and measuring spoons are also great tools to help with your meal prepping in order to portion out your meals into single servings for greater convenience.

At the very least, you may find it helpful to start cooking a side the night before you plan to eat the meal to save you some time the next night when you cook the rest of the meal.

RECIPES OF THE MONTH



Try these recipes as make-ahead options to freeze and enjoy as future meals.



MEXICAN CHICKEN SOUP

From HungryGirl.com

Prep Time: 30 minutes ▪ *Cook Time: 3 – 4 hours or 7 – 8 hours*

NUTRITION INFO – PER SERVING

Makes 10 serving

154 CALORIES ▪ 10.5g CARBS ▪ 18.5g PROTEIN
3g FIBER ▪ 4g FAT

Great option as a light lunch, or pair with a side salad for a heartier dinner.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ lbs. raw boneless skinless chicken breasts, halved
- ⅛ tsp black pepper
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 cup plus 2 tbsp chopped cilantro
- 4 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 2 cups chopped tomatoes
- 2 cups chopped carrots
- 2 cups chopped onion
- 1 cup chopped celery
- ¼ cup seeded and chopped jalapeño pepper (about 1 pepper's worth)
- 2 tsp chopped garlic
- 1 tsp chili powder
- 1 tsp cumin
- ½ cup plus 2 tbsp fat-free plain Greek yogurt
- 5 oz. (about ¾ cup) chopped avocado (about 1 medium avocado's worth)
- lime wedges (optional garnish)

DIRECTIONS

1. Place chicken in a slow cooker and season with pepper and ¼ teaspoon salt. Top with ½ cup cilantro.
2. Add all remaining ingredients except yogurt, avocado, and remaining cilantro. Stir well.
3. Cover and cook on high for 3 – 4 hours or on low for 7 - 8 hours, until chicken is fully cooked.
4. Transfer chicken to a large bowl. Shred with two forks – one to hold the chicken in place and the other to scrape across and shred it.
5. Return shredded chicken to the slow cooker and mix well.
6. Top each serving with 1 tablespoon cilantro, 1 tablespoon yogurt, and ½ oz. (about 2 tablespoons) avocado.



VEGGIE-FIED LASAGNA

From HungryGirl.com

Prep Time: 20 minutes ▪ *Cook Time: 1 hour*

NUTRITION INFO – PER SERVING

Makes 4 servings

265 CALORIES ▪ 32.5g CARBS ▪ 24g PROTEIN
11g FIBER ▪ 4.5g TOTAL FAT

INGREDIENTS

- 3 medium zucchini, ends removed, sliced lengthwise
- 1 large portabella mushroom, sliced into strips
- 1 large eggplant, ends removed, sliced lengthwise
- 2 cups canned crushed tomatoes
- ¼ tsp garlic powder
- ¼ tsp onion powder
- ¼ tsp Italian seasoning
- one 16 oz. package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
- 1 cup fat-free ricotta cheese
- 2 tbsp fat-free liquid egg substitute
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh basil
- ¼ tsp salt
- dash ground nutmeg
- 1 cup frozen ground-beef-style soy crumbles, thawed
- ½ cup shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese
- 1 tbsp reduced-fat Parmesan-style grated topping

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Spray an 8" x 8" baking pan with nonstick spray.
2. Lay paper towels on counter next to the stove (to drain veggies during the next step).
3. Bring a grill pan sprayed with nonstick spray to medium-high heat. Working in batches as needed, lay zucchini, mushroom, and eggplant slices in the pan and cook until softened, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer cooked veggies to the paper towels.
4. In a large bowl, mix crushed tomatoes, garlic powder, onion powder, and Italian seasoning.
5. In another large bowl, mix spinach, ricotta cheese, egg substitute, basil, salt, and nutmeg.
6. Evenly layer ingredients in the baking pan: half of the seasoned tomatoes, half of the sliced veggies, half of the spinach mixture, and all of the soy crumbles.
7. Evenly layer remaining veggies in the opposite direction of the first layer, followed by remaining spinach mixture and remaining seasoned tomatoes. Top with mozzarella cheese and Parmesan-style topping.
8. Bake until cheese has lightly browned, about 30 minutes.



BBQ CHICKEN & CAULI' RICE CASSEROLE

From HungryGirl.com

Prep Time: 15 minutes ▪ Cook Time: 45 minutes

NUTRITION INFO – PER SERVING

Makes 6 servings

226 CALORIES ▪ 18.5g CARBS ▪ 24g PROTEIN
2.5g FIBER ▪ 6.5g FAT

INGREDIENTS

- 5 cups roughly chopped cauliflower (or use 3 ¾ cups frozen cauliflower rice)
- 1 lb. raw boneless, skinless chicken breast
- ¼ tsp each salt and black pepper
- 1 cup chopped red onion
- ½ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- ¼ tsp garlic powder
- 1 cup shredded reduced-fat cheddar cheese
- ¾ cup barbecue sauce (with 45 calories or less per 2-tbsp serving)



DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Spray a 9" x 13" baking pan with nonstick spray.
2. Pulse cauliflower in a blender until reduced to rice-sized pieces, working in batches as needed. (Skip this step if using pre-made frozen cauliflower rice.)
3. Pound chicken to ½-inch thickness. Season with salt and pepper. Place chicken in an extra-large skillet sprayed with nonstick spray on medium heat. Cook for about 4 minutes per side, until cooked through. Transfer to a cutting board.
4. Remove skillet from heat and clean, if needed. Re-spray, and return to medium heat. Add cauliflower and onion. Cook and stir until mostly softened (about 8 - 10 minutes). Transfer to a large bowl.
5. Chop chicken and add to the large bowl. Add cilantro, garlic powder, ½ cup cheddar, and ¼ cup barbecue sauce. Mix thoroughly.
6. Transfer mixture to the baking pan, and smooth out the top. Top with remaining ½ cup barbecue sauce and ½ cup cheddar.
7. Bake until entire dish is hot and cheddar topping has melted, 20 - 25 minutes.



Product of the Month RECIPE KEEPER

Recipe Keeper is an app you can download to your smart phone or other smart device to help you make healthier choices by creating meal plans, organizing your recipes, and updating your grocery list along the way. This app has a built-in meal planner so you can plan your meals for the week from the recipes you have chosen. Recipe Keeper provides features that are similar to the "Paprika" app we highlighted in our March 2020 newsletter, except Recipe Keeper is FREE!

For those of you who prefer to use pen and paper for your meal planning, consider ordering a meal planning pad to keep on your refrigerator. Many options are available online from a variety of retailers or get started using the one on the next page.



