

FitFUTURE

Strategies for
Better Living.

Quick and Healthy Meals



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During the week, demands on parent's time can be high with work, school schedules, children's outside activities, homework and other commitments. It can be easy to fall into the habit of not making meals and grabbing food from fast food restaurants or snacking on high calorie foods that have "empty calories".

With some preparation on the weekends or a day off, parents can meet the demands of the week and still offer a quick and healthy meal. Here are some steps to follow:

- 1 First write down 5-7 entrees the family enjoys that are tasty, kid friendly, nutritious but don't take a long time to prepare. Once you have the entrées, you can add healthy sides like vegetables, fruit and whole grains. To round out the meal, add a glass of nonfat or low fat milk.
- 2 Next look at your pantry and refrigerator to see what ingredients are missing. Add these items to your weekly grocery list. Some basic staples to keep on hand may include canned tomatoes, spaghetti sauce, beans, frozen vegetables, whole grain pasta and rice.

- 3 Next prepare some of the meals ahead of time. Batch cook so you have leftovers for another meal or for the freezer.
- 4 Lastly, ask for help setting the table, placing the casserole in the oven before you get home, washing and chopping vegetables or cleaning up after the meal.

Here are some quick and healthy meal ideas:

- Chili with or without meat and corn bread
- Grilled Chicken, Whole Grain Rice and Vegetable
- Salmon or Tilapia with Quinoa and Vegetable
- Stir Fry or Fajitas: Tofu, Chicken, Shrimp, Pork or other lean meat/protein with veggies over brown rice or small whole grain tortilla. You can purchase stir fry vegetables already precut in the produce or freezer section of the grocery store.
- Leafy green salad, mandarin oranges, other colorful vegetables with grilled chicken and low fat dressing
- Homemade Minestrone or Chicken Vegetable Soup with whole grain crackers and fresh fruit
- Imitation crab or shrimp sautéed in diced tomatoes, fresh spinach, garlic and olive oil and served over whole grain pasta or spaghetti squash
- Breakfast for dinner- whole grain waffle or pancake served with peanut butter or almond butter and fresh fruit

Planning meals saves time, money and reduces stress in meal preparation, allowing you to offer a nutritious meal the whole family will enjoy.

