Chapter 11
Planning Meals

Domestic Cook
Plans menus, orders ingredients, prepares food, and cleans kitchen and cooking utensils in private home. May also serve meals and perform seasonal cooking duties, such as canning.

Caterer
Prepares and serves food and refreshments at social affairs.

Head Banquet Waiter
Plans details for banquets, receptions, and other social functions. Hires extra help, directs setting up of tables and decorations, and supervises waitstaff.

Terms to Know
- meal manager
- menu
- course
- convenience food
- budget
- income
- fixed expense
- flexible expense
- taste buds
- finished food
- semiprepared food
- work simplification
- prepreparation
- conservation
- recycling

Objectives
After studying this chapter, you will be able to
- plan nutritious menus using meal patterns based on MyPyramid.
- prepare a family food budget.
- plan menus with an appealing variety of flavors, colors, textures, shapes, sizes, and temperatures.
- describe resources a meal manager can use as alternatives to time and energy.
A meal manager is someone who uses resources to reach goals related to preparing and serving food. A meal manager's resources include money, time, energy, knowledge, skills, and technology. Food and equipment are resources, too. Meal managers must make many decisions based on these resources. They must decide how much time and money they are willing to spend planning and preparing meals. This will affect their decisions about what foods to serve and how to prepare them.

A meal manager will use available resources to reach the following four goals:

- Provide good nutrition to meet the needs of each family member.
- Use planned spending to make meals fit into the family food budget.
- Prepare satisfying meals that look and taste appealing.
- Control the use of time and energy involved in meal preparation. See 11-1.

The meal manager is responsible for seeing these goals are reached. However, he or she may not be the only one working to reach them. The meal manager may assign various tasks to other family members.

Provide Good Nutrition

People tend to eat foods they like. However, foods people like may not always be the foods they need to stay healthy. For good health, the foods people eat must supply their bodies with the right amounts of proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, minerals, and water. Everyone needs the same nutrients, but not in the same amounts. For instance, pregnant women need more of some nutrients than other adults. Active people need more of some nutrients than inactive people.

Meal Patterns

Some people might eat a few pieces of pizza and call it "lunch." Others might consume a plate of spaghetti and call it "supper." Perhaps you realize a meal should be composed of more than just pizza or spaghetti. However, you might not know what else to serve with these food items to make the meals complete.

Meal managers can use a meal pattern to plan meals that provide a variety of foods. A meal pattern is an outline of the basic foods normally served at a meal. A meal pattern based on MyPyramid can provide all the nutrients needed each day.

You can set up a MyPyramid meal pattern for any calorie level. Simply divide the recommended daily amounts of food for each food group by three. This will tell you about how much food from each group you need at each meal. See 11-2.

This basic pattern works equally well for planning breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The meal manager can use snacks to fill in added food group amounts needed by individual family members. He or she can also add servings to one meal to make up for a shortage in another meal. For instance, some people may want to skip the vegetable group at breakfast. An extra vegetable serving for lunch, dinner, or snack can easily accommodate this preference.

The meal manager must make sure family members eat the recommended amounts from each food group throughout the day. In general, breakfast supplies one-fourth of the day's total nutritional needs. Lunch and dinner each supply one-third. Snacks supply the remaining needs.
Breakfast

Eating breakfast helps prevent a midmorning slump. A good breakfast should be rich in complex carbohydrates for energy. Enriched or whole grain toast and cereals are popular carbohydrate choices for breakfast. The morning meal is a good time to work some fruit into your diet. You might try topping cereal or pancakes with fruit instead of sugar or syrup. Breakfast should provide a small amount of fat to help the meal stay with you throughout the morning. To help you get your daily 3 cups from the milk group, include a lowfat or fat free choice for breakfast. Foods from the meat and beans group are optional at breakfast. Remember, you need only 5 to 7 ounce equivalents from this group each day.

Lunch

Many meal managers make good use of leftovers at lunchtime. You can use leftovers to prepare nutritious salads, casseroles, and sandwiches. For instance, suppose you have some leftover lean roast beef. Family members who carry their lunches to work or school could take hearty roast beef sandwiches. Those who eat their lunches at home could add strips of roast beef to a chef’s salad.

In cold weather, hot foods are popular for lunch. Those who must take their lunches can carry soups, stews, and casseroles in wide-mouthed vacuum containers. In warmer weather, you can use the same containers to carry cold fruit or main dish salads.

Dinner

Dinner is the one meal of the day many people can eat leisurely and share with family members. Dinner is often a heavier meal than lunch.

MyPyramid Meal Pattern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meal</th>
<th>Grains Group (2-3 oz eq per meal*)</th>
<th>Vegetable Group (1-1½ cups per meal*)</th>
<th>Fruit Group (½-1 cup per meal*)</th>
<th>Milk Group (1 cup per meal*)</th>
<th>Meat and Beans Group (2-2½ oz eq per meal*)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td>Buckwheat pancakes, Grits, Muesli, Oatmeal, Toasted oat cereal, Whole wheat bagels</td>
<td>Hash browns, Onions, peppers, broccoli, mushrooms in omelets, Tomato juice</td>
<td>Grapefruit, Melon, Orange and prune juices, Papayas, mangoes, Strawberries</td>
<td>Lowfat cheese in omelets, Hot chocolate</td>
<td>Canadian bacon, Eggs, Ham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Tortillas, Whole grain sandwich bread, Whole wheat pasta in soups and salads</td>
<td>Beans in soup, Lettuce and tomato on sandwiches, Spinach salad, Vegetables in soups</td>
<td>Applesauce, Bananas, Cherries, Fruit salad, Grapes, Plums</td>
<td>Lowfat cheese on sandwiches, Cottage cheese</td>
<td>Ham, chicken, tuna, and egg salad, Lean luncheon meats, Peanut butter, Refried beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>Biscuits, cornbread, dumplings, Brown rice, pasta, Bulgur, kasha, couscous, Whole grain rolls</td>
<td>Baked beans, lentils, Corn, green beans, winter squash, Stir-fried vegetables, Sweet potatoes, Green salad</td>
<td>Baked apples, Cranberry sauce, Grilled pineapple, Poached pears, Spiced peaches</td>
<td>Cheese in casseroles, Fat free milk, Pudding</td>
<td>Beef, lamb, pork, veal, Chicken, turkey, Fish, shellfish, Tofu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snacks</td>
<td>Matzos, Popcorn, Rye crackers</td>
<td>Carrot and celery sticks, Cauliflower</td>
<td>Dried figs, dates, and apricots, Raisins</td>
<td>Fat free yogurt, Kefir</td>
<td>Hard-cooked eggs, Nuts, Sunflower seeds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Smaller amounts within a range are needed by teens at lower calorie levels; larger amounts are needed by teens at higher calorie levels.

11-2 Teens can use a MyPyramid meal pattern like this to plan nutritious meals.
The meal manager can add variety to dinners in many ways. Occasionally serving a new dish is an easy way to add interest to family meals. The meal manager can also try serving common foods in new ways. For instance, instead of serving chicken, broccoli, and rice separately, combine the chicken and broccoli. Toss in some red pepper strips and soy sauce. Serve this medley over the rice as a tasty stir-fry.

In hot weather, appetites often become sluggish. You might replace a filling, hot entree with a cool, refreshing main dish salad. Hot whole grain rolls and a fresh fruit cup would complete the meal.

Varying preparation methods is another way to add variety to meals. For instance, suppose you always serve mashed potatoes. You might try roasted potatoes with a dash of herbs for a change of pace. See 11-3.

Snacks
With planning, the meal manager can make sure snacks satisfy nutritional needs as well as hunger. Fresh fruits and vegetables, lowfat cheese and yogurt, whole grain crackers, and nuts are good snacks. They supplement foods eaten at meals by adding nutrients to the diet.

Planning a Meal
A written menu can be a useful tool in helping a meal manager reach the goal of providing good nutrition. A menu is a list of the foods to be served at a meal. Daily menus can help meal managers assess whether family members are getting foods from all the groups in MyPyramid.

Some menus are planned with several courses. A course is a part of a meal made up of all the foods served at one time. At an elaborate dinner, appetizer, soup, salad, main course, and dessert may each be served as separate courses.

At an informal supper, the salad and main dish may be served together. An appetizer, soup, and dessert may be omitted from the menu.

Generally, the best menus center on one food. In the MyPyramid meal pattern, grain foods are often the largest portions on the plate. However, plain grain foods have mild flavors that can be seasoned to blend with almost any other food. Therefore, meal managers usually center their menus on a protein food instead. Foods from the meat and beans group often call certain menu combinations to mind. For instance, roast turkey calls to mind stuffing and yams. Baked ham may make you think of scalloped potatoes and green beans.

When planning a meal, you may find it easiest to make your menu selections in the following order:
1. Choose the main dish of the main course. Keep in mind that the main dish does not have to be from the meat and beans group. Try planning a meal around a vegetable main dish, such as vegetable soup. This can be a great way to help family members get recommended amounts of vegetables.

Q: Aren’t you more likely to gain weight if you eat a heavy meal late in the day?
A: Timing of meals does not trigger weight gain, consuming excess calories does. Therefore, you will not gain weight if the heavy meal is within your daily calorie needs. However, if the meal puts you over your daily calorie needs, you will gain weight no matter how early in the day you eat it.
2. Select the grain foods that will accompany the main dish, such as pasta, rice, or barley. Make sure at least half of your choices are from whole grain sources. You may serve bread or rolls along with or in place of other grain foods. Just make sure the total amount of grain foods served does not exceed family members' daily recommended amounts.

3. Select one or two vegetable side dishes that will complement the main dish. (Vegetables and grain foods may also be part of the main dish rather than side dishes. Casseroles and hearty soups often include vegetables and grains in this way.)

4. Choose the salad. Be sure to go easy on the dressing.

5. If discretionary calories allow, select the dessert and/or first course. Remember to make nutrient-dense choices for these courses, too. Desserts and appetizers are often good places to work a serving from the fruit group into your menu.

6. Plan a beverage to go with the meal. Fat free milk is often a good beverage choice. Serving milk is an easy way to include a food from the milk group in your menu, 11-4.
Later sections in this chapter will give you other points to keep in mind as you choose individual menu items. Following these guidelines will help you serve meals that are appealing as well as nutritious.

**Planning for Special Needs**

Some people have health problems that affect their food needs. For instance, someone with heart disease may be advised to eat a diet low in sodium, cholesterol, and saturated fat. When planning meals, a meal manager must consider such special needs.

Initially, the meal manager and the family member with unique needs should work with a registered dietitian. The dietitian can offer guidance in meal planning. He or she can also assess whether nutrient needs are being met.

A meal manager could plan separate meals for a family member with unique needs. In most cases, however, other family members can adapt their eating habits to follow the special diet. For example, all family members can follow a lowfat, high-carbohydrate diet prescribed to someone with diabetes mellitus. Adapting family eating habits has two key advantages. First, it keeps the family member with special needs from feeling isolated. He or she will not feel deprived of foods other family members are enjoying. Second, it saves the meal manager the time and effort of planning and preparing two sets of meals. Special diets often have a third advantage of being more healthful than the family’s typical diet.

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**Q: Won’t snacking between meals offset my efforts to lose weight?**

A: Snacks won’t interfere with weight loss as long as the calories they provide are considered in the daily meal plan. In fact, a snack between meals can keep you from feeling overly hungry. This could prevent you from overeating at mealtime—a practice that can definitely offset weight loss efforts.

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The second goal of meal management is planned spending. Nearly all families find they need to establish a spending plan for food. Families in the United States spend, on the average, about 10 percent of their disposable incomes for food. Families must consider a variety of information when determining the amount of money they can spend for food.

**Factors Affecting Food Needs**

The activity, size, sex, and age of each member affect a family’s food needs. It costs more to feed some people than it does to feed others because people’s nutrient needs differ. It costs more to feed an athlete, for example, than

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11-4 An ice cold glass of milk goes well with almost any meal.

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it does to feed an office worker. It costs more to feed a person who weighs 250 pounds (112 kg) than a person who weighs 110 pounds (49 kg). After the age of 12, it costs more to feed boys than it does to feed girls. It also costs more to feed a teenager than it does to feed a senior citizen.

Health problems also influence food needs. A family member who is allergic to wheat or milk, for example, might need special foods. These special foods are often expensive.

Factors Affecting Food Purchases

You might think all families with similar food needs would spend about the same amount of money for food. However, this is not always true. You can acquire similar quantities of nutrients at very different costs, depending on the foods purchased.

Think of two baskets of food. One basket contains a beef rib roast, fresh asparagus, fresh oranges, bakery bread, and a frozen cake. The other basket contains ground beef, canned green beans, frozen orange juice concentrate, store brand bread, and a cake mix. Both baskets provide similar nutrients. However, the second basket will cost quite a bit less. See 11-5.

The following factors determine the amount of money a meal manager spends for food:

• family income
• meal manager’s ability to choose foods that are within the family food budget
• meal manager’s shopping skills and knowledge of the marketplace
• amount of time the meal manager has to plan and prepare meals
• food preferences of family members
• family values

Income is a major factor in determining the amount of money a family spends for food. Generally, as income increases, a meal manager spends more money for food. As income increases, the use of dairy products, better cuts of meat, and bakery goods tend to increase. Meanwhile, the use of less expensive staple foods, such as beans and rice, tends to decrease.

Knowing how to choose the tastiest, most nutritious foods for the money spent is an important meal management skill. A meal manager needs to know how similar products differ in quality and nutrition. He or she needs to know when buying a brand name is important. He or she should be able to identify products that contain hidden service costs. A meal manager also needs to know how to compare prices on a per serving basis. Recognizing seasonal food values and choosing quality meats and produce are other meal management skills.

The meal manager’s available time and energy affect the family food budget. If these resources are limited, the meal manager will have to spend more money on convenience foods. Convenience foods are foods that have had some amount of service added to them. For instance, a meal manager who has ample time and energy could buy ingredients to make homemade lasagna. However, a meal manager who has little time and energy might purchase frozen lasagna instead. The frozen entree costs more, but it cooks quickly and requires no preparation.

Food likes and dislikes affect spending on food purchases. A family that eats steaks and fresh produce will spend more than a family that eats casseroles and canned goods.
A family’s value system affects spending. Some families view food as merely a basic need. They would rather spend their money on other goals. Other families value meals as a source of entertainment. These families are likely to spend more money for food.

Preparing a Food Budget

Most families have a set amount of money that must cover many expenses. To keep from overspending in one area, such as food, they establish a household budget. A budget is a plan for managing how you spend the money you receive, 11-6. The meal manager has a responsibility to stay within the budget. The following steps will help you prepare a budget:

1. On a piece of paper, record your average monthly income. **Income** is money received. You will probably receive most income as wages earned by working. Income also includes money you receive as tips, gifts, and interest on bank accounts. Unless you can count on receiving a set amount from these sources, however, do not include them in your budget. Also, be sure to list only your take-home pay. Money deducted from your paycheck for taxes and other payments is not available for you to use for household expenses.

2. List your monthly fixed expenses and the cost of each. A **fixed expense** is a regularly recurring cost in a set amount. Fixed expenses include rent or mortgage payments, car payments, insurance premiums, and installment loan payments. You should also list savings as a fixed expense. Otherwise, you might end up spending money you intended to save.

3. List your flexible expenses and their estimated monthly costs. **Flexible expenses** are regularly recurring costs that vary in amount. Flexible expenses include food, clothing, utility bills, transportation, and entertainment.

4. Figure the total of your fixed and estimated flexible expenses. Compare this amount

| Monthly Budget |
|---------|-----|
| Income  | $2080 |
| Fixed expenses |
| Rent    | $625 |
| Car payment | 300 |
| Insurance premium | 110 |
| Savings | 100 |
| Flexible expenses |
| Food    | 240 |
| Nonfood items | 60 |
| Clothing | 95 |
| Utility bills | 180 |
| Gasoline/oil | 150 |
| Entertainment | 120 |
| Gifts and contributions | 100 |
| Total expenses | $2080 |

11-6 Figuring your monthly budget will help you decide how much you can afford to spend for various items, including food.
with your income. If your income equals your expenses, you will be able to provide for your needs and meet your financial obligations. If your income is greater than your expenses, you can put the extra money toward future goals. If your expenses are greater than your income, however, you will need to make some adjustments.

Reducing Food Expenses

You can handle a budget shortage in two ways: increasing income and decreasing expenses. Working overtime or getting another job would provide you with extra income. Looking at your current spending patterns will help you see how you can reduce expenses.

Although you cannot do much to change your fixed expenses, you can adjust your flexible expenses, including food. Save your grocery store receipts for a few weeks to see what kinds of foods you are buying.

You already know the cost of food has little bearing on its nutritional value. Each group of MyPyramid includes both expensive and inexpensive foods. Protein foods are the most costly, but prices of foods in this group vary widely. T-bone steak, for example, costs more than ground beef. Both, however, provide similar nutrients. Milk, eggs, and cheese also are protein foods. Dried milk costs less than fluid fresh milk. Medium eggs usually cost less than large eggs. Domestic cheeses cost less than imported cheeses. Dried legumes are an inexpensive source of protein that can help stretch food dollars. See 11-7.

The fruit and vegetable groups are the next most costly food groups. However, foods in these groups vary widely in price, too. Before you buy, compare prices of fresh produce with frozen and canned products. Fresh fruits and vegetables are usually economical when they are in season. During off-seasons, however, canned and frozen products usually are cheaper. Grocers often price small pieces of fresh produce lower than larger pieces. Store brand and generic canned and frozen fruits and vegetables cost less than national brands.

The skillful meal manager also knows margarine usually costs less than butter. Unsweetened ready-to-eat breakfast cereals usually cost less than presweetened cereals. Cereals you cook yourself cost even less. Store brand bread usually costs less than brand name bread or bakery bread. Large packages usually are better buys than small packages. However, wise shoppers compare prices on a per serving basis before buying one size over another.

Convenience products and snack foods are often costly. You may be able to save money by preparing more foods from scratch and buying fewer snack foods. Using coupons and taking advantage of store specials will also help you cut costs.

Remember the grocery store is not the only place you buy food. Restaurants, concession stands, and vending machines also take a portion of your food dollar. You will need to evaluate these purchases in relation to your overall budget.

After identifying ways you can reduce food costs, determine a realistic figure for your

11-7 Beans and pasta are lowfat sources of plant protein that help make the ground turkey in this hearty dish go further.
monthly food budget. If you do your shopping weekly, divide this amount by four. Then keep careful track of your food purchases for a few weeks to see whether you are overspending. Sometimes your records may show you have spent more than your weekly budget. For instance, stocking up on sale items one week may cause you to spend more than your estimated amount. However, this may enable you to spend less money the following week.

Food is only one of the flexible expenses in your budget. You can take similar steps to reduce other spending areas, such as clothing, transportation, and entertainment.

Prepare Satisfying Meals

The third goal of meal management is to prepare satisfying meals. All family members should find a meal appealing. This goal can be one of the most difficult to accomplish.

Food Preferences

Studies have shown people like some groups of foods better than others. People find vegetables, salads, and soups least appealing. They like breads, meats, and desserts best. Studies also show wide ranges of preferences within a liked class of foods. In the meat class, for instance, respondents listed grilled steak, fried chicken, and roast turkey among their favorites. The least-liked foods in the same group were lamb, liver, fish, and creamed and combination dishes.

The foods you prefer to eat usually are familiar foods that taste good to you. Many factors affect your food preferences, including sight, smell, and touch. As a result, the flavor, color, texture, size, shape, and temperature of foods help determine how well you like them.

Flavor

Flavor is a mixture of taste, aroma, and texture. Information about the taste of food is conveyed to your brain by nerves at the base of your taste buds. Taste buds are flavor sensors covering the surface of the tongue. The four basic tastes recognized by human taste buds are sweet, sour, salty, and bitter.

Some foods have one distinct flavor. Sugar, for example, is sweet. Other foods have a blend of flavors. Sweet and sour pork has the sweetness of sugar. It also has the sourness of vinegar and the saltiness of pork.

Aroma is closely associated with flavor. When you like a food, it will taste even better to you if it has a good smell. For example, if you

11-8 Not surprisingly, desserts are one of the most popular food categories.
like coffee, the smell of coffee brewing will stimulate your appetite and taste buds.

Flavor should be an important consideration when planning meals. Some flavors seem to go together. Turkey and cranberry sauce, peanut butter and jelly, and apples and cinnamon are popular flavor combinations. Other flavors seem to fight one another. For instance, you should not serve rutabagas and Brussels sprouts together. Their strong flavors do not complement each other.

When planning meals, do not repeat similar flavors. For instance, avoid serving tomatoes on a salad that will accompany pasta with tomato sauce. Your menus should not include all spicy foods or all mild foods. Plan to serve foods with different flavors.

**Color**

Avoid too many pale foods when planning a menu. Colorful foods appeal to the eyes and stimulate the appetite. Choose foods that provide a variety of colors. However, avoid colors that would clash. For instance, bright red tomatoes would not be pleasing with the purple color of red cabbage.

*Garnishes* can add color and eye appeal to a meal. A sprinkling of nutmeg on custard or paprika on potatoes adds a touch of color. Meal managers can use lemon wedges, green pepper strips, and parsley springs to add color to a plate. Peach halves, orange twists, and cucumber slices are also simple garnishes.

**Presentation**

*Presentation* refers to the way food looks when it is brought to the table and presented to a diner. Along with colors, the arrangement of foods on a plate affects their presentation. Some restaurant chefs put much emphasis on the presentation of foods. They carefully fan out meat slices to make a moderate portion look bigger. They artistically sprinkle snipped herbs or grated cheese over pasta. They skillfully drizzle dessert sauces to write words or draw pictures.

If you are preparing a fancy meal, you may want to try some of these creative techniques. For everyday meals, however, two simple guidelines will help you present food attractively. First, avoid heaping foods on top of one another. Place foods side by side and spread them slightly to fill most of the space on the plate.

Second, be careful not to smear or splash food on the edge of the plate. If you happen to drip, use a paper towel to wipe the edge of the plate before serving it.

**Texture**

Texture is the feel of food in the mouth. Familiar food textures are hard, chewy, soft, crisp, smooth, sticky, dry, gritty, and tough. A meal made up of foods that are all soft or all crisp lacks interest. A meal made up of a variety of textures is much more appealing.

Serve foods in combinations that have texture contrasts. Crisp cookies and soft, smooth pudding is one example. Tossing toasted, slivered almonds into a pan of green beans adds a pleasing difference in texture.

When planning meals, work for a balance between soft and solid foods. Be sure to consider chewy versus crunchy, dry versus moist, and smooth versus crisp. Avoid serving two or more chopped, creamed, or mashed dishes together.

**Shape and Size**

The size and shape of food items affect how appetizing they look. Avoid serving several foods made up of small pieces. For instance, spears of broccoli would be a better choice than peas to accompany a chicken and rice casserole. When choosing a salad to serve with the casserole, a lettuce wedge would be more appealing than coleslaw. Choose foods with various shapes and sizes when planning meals.
The most appealing meals include foods with a variety of flavor, colors, textures, shapes, sizes, and temperatures.

The vegetable toppings give the pizza some nice color and texture, but the pieces are all the same size and shape. The onions and tomatoes on the salad repeat flavors in the pizza.

The salad provides a temperature contrast to the pizza, but everything in this meal is pale in color. The pizza and salad each have a uniform flavor and texture.

The variety of shapes and sizes used for the toppings give the pizza eye appeal. Adding crunchy croutons and tender cheese shreds to the salad improves texture contrasts and introduces new flavors.

11-9 The most appealing meals include foods with a variety of flavor, colors, textures, shapes, sizes, and temperatures.
Temperature

The temperature of foods can also affect appetite appeal. A cold salad, for example, provides a pleasing temperature contrast to a piping hot entree. Icy cold sherbet cools the sensation created by steaming chili.

Hot foods should be hot and cold foods should be cold. Imagine a steaming bowl of soup and the same soup barely warm. Picture a cold, crisp tossed salad next to a room temperature salad bowl filled with wilted greens. Foods served lukewarm do not usually stimulate the senses of taste and sight. See 11-9.

Control the Use of Time and Energy

Meal managers use time and energy to plan menus, buy and store food, and prepare and serve meals. They also need time and energy to care for the kitchen and dining area. The fourth goal of successful meal management is to control these uses of time and energy. Busy lifestyles cause many meal managers to think of this goal before any of the others.

Two main factors help determine the amount of time meal managers need to plan and prepare meals. These are family size and food preferences. A meal manager will spend more time preparing meals for a large family than for a small family. A meal that provides enough leftovers to feed a small family two meals would feed a large family only once.

Preparing complex dishes and five course dinners requires more time than making simple recipes and one-dish meals.

Alternatives to the Use of Time and Energy

A meal manager can use several alternatives to time and energy. These include money, knowledge, skills, technology, and time itself. All these resources are limited. Each meal manager has to balance how he or she uses them to best meet his or her family’s goals.

When money is available, the meal manager could use it to hire help or pay for time-saving appliances. However, a more common way to use money in place of time is to buy ready-made foods. These foods may come from restaurant takeout menus or grocery store deli counters.

Though short on time, some meal managers wish to be more involved in food preparation than takeout allows. Meal prep kitchens provide an option for these meal managers. These businesses supply prepared ingredients, which meal managers can use to quickly assemble provided recipes. Food items are then ready to take home and cook or freeze for future use. This saves the meal manager the time and energy required to shop, get ingredients ready, and clean up the kitchen.

Some busy meal managers meet their goal to control the use of time by spending money to eat out. With a little thought, eating out can meet the other three meal management goals, too. Meal managers can help family members choose items from the menu that meet the goal of good nutrition. They can limit the frequency of dining out to meet the goal of planned spending. They can choose restaurants with varied menus to meet the goal of satisfying meals.

Meal managers’ knowledge and skills can be alternatives for time and energy. Meal managers may gain some knowledge by studying and asking questions. However, much knowledge and most skills come from experience. Through practice, meal managers find shortcuts and develop speed. For instance, learning the best time, place, and method for buying groceries can save time on a shopping trip. Learning how to correctly clear a table can save energy at the end of a meal.
Technology can be an alternative to time and energy in the kitchen. You can use a computer to help you plan menus. Recipe Web sites and software programs often suggest pre-planned menus. You can use these menus as is or adapt them to reflect your personal preferences. You can print shopping lists that go with the menus. Saving menus for favorite meals will reduce planning time in the future. See 11-10.

A meal manager can use time itself to save time. Successful meal managers are aware of how they use time, and they look for ways to save it. Using time to organize the kitchen for efficiency can save time later when preparing meals. Using time to plan menus can save time later by helping you shop more efficiently. You can make the most of the time you spend cooking by preparing double recipes. You can turn leftovers into a different dish to serve on another day or freeze them for later use.

Using Convenience Foods

Some meal managers use convenience foods to reduce or eliminate food preparation and cooking time at home. Some ready-made foods are so commonly used, people do not think of preparing meals without them.

You can group convenience foods according to the amount of service they contain. **Finished foods** are convenience foods that are ready for eating either immediately or after simply heating or thawing. Packaged cookies, canned spaghetti, and frozen fruits are examples of finished foods. **Semiprepared foods** are convenience foods that still need to have some service performed. Cake mixes are semiprepared foods. The meal manager beats in eggs and liquid, pours the batter into pans, and bakes it for a specified time.

The cost of convenience depends on the amount of service a product contains. Generally, the more built-in service a product contains, the higher the product’s price will be. A product that contains more service reduces the amount of time the meal manager spends measuring, mixing, and cooking. Most convenience foods cost more than their homemade counterparts. However, there are some exceptions. Frozen orange juice concentrate and some commercial cake mixes cost less than their homemade counterparts.

Convenience foods have both advantages and disadvantages as explained in 11-11. Before buying a convenience product, ask yourself the following questions:

- How does the convenience food help meet my family’s daily nutrient needs?
- Does buying convenience foods fit into my food budget? (Is the time I save worth the extra cost?)
- How does the cost of the convenience product compare with the cost of the homemade product?
- How costly are any additional ingredients I must add? (Some convenience mixes require the addition of foods like meat, eggs, or sour cream.)
How much do I need to feed my family? (The cost of a convenience product may seem reasonable if you are feeding one or two people. However, it may seem costly if you are feeding three or more.)

How do the appearance and flavor of the convenience product compare with those of its homemade counterpart?

Work Simplification

Work simplification is the performance of tasks in the simplest way possible to conserve time and energy. Work simplification techniques can help meal managers reach their goal for controlling the use of time. The meal manager can simplify tasks by minimizing hand and body motions. He or she can organize workspace and tools. Changing the product or the method used to prepare the product can also simplify some tasks.

You can minimize hand and body motions in many ways. Performing a task repeatedly can eventually result in reduced preparation time. This is because the person performing the task develops a skill. A professional cook who chops celery every day soon learns an efficient method for chopping celery.

Another way to minimize motions is to rinse and soak dishes. This simplifies the task of washing dishes.

Saving yourself steps in the kitchen is a method of work simplification, too. Try not to walk back and forth across the kitchen while preparing a meal. Instead, get all your equipment ready first. Then go to the cabinets and then to the refrigerator to get the ingredients you need.

An organized kitchen simplifies work. Store tools in the area where you most often use them. For instance, you can store pots and pans in a cabinet close to the range. Many experienced meal managers buy duplicates of inexpensive tools like rubber spatulas, wooden spoons, and measuring utensils. They store these tools in different parts of the kitchen where the tools will be easy to reach. By using the correct tool for each task, the meal manager can also simplify work. Measuring flour in a dry measure is much more efficient than measuring it in a liquid measure.

You can simplify work by changing the food product or the method used to prepare it. For instance, if the meal plan calls for biscuits but time is short, you can opt for store bought bread instead. Making dropped biscuits instead of rolled biscuits would be another way to save time.

Preparation is another work simplification technique. Preparation is any step you do in advance to save time when you are getting a meal ready. Chopping onions and shredding cheese might be preparation tasks. After completing these steps, you can put the onions and cheese in bags in the freezer. When preparing a recipe calling for these ingredients, you can quickly measure the portion you need from the freezer bag. Washing and trimming chicken, peeling oranges, and cooking rice may be other preparation tasks you could do.

Conserving Resources in the Kitchen

Conservation refers to the planned use of a resource to avoid waste. Human energy is not the only type of energy meal managers need to conserve in the kitchen. They also need to conserve fuel energy, such as gas and electricity. Steps you can take to conserve energy include using the oven to cook more than one food at a time. Cover pans on the range to keep in heat. Avoid unnecessarily opening the oven door and letting out heat while using the appliance. Likewise, avoid opening refrigerator and freezer doors, which lets in heat.

Water is another resource you need to conserve in the kitchen. Avoid letting the water run...
while washing dishes. Run the dishwasher only when it is full.

You can also conserve resources in the kitchen by recycling. This means processing a material so it can be used again. Many communities collect empty metal cans, plastic bottles, and glass containers for recycling. The metal, plastic, and glass can be made into new products. Collection facilities often take cardboard from cereal, cracker, and convenience mix boxes, too. Recycling these items keeps them from taking up space in public garbage landfills. It also lessens the need for raw materials to make new products. A meal manager can easily take these steps to help care for the environment while meeting meal planning goals.
Chapter 11 Review
Planning Meals

Summary

Meal managers have four main goals in planning meals for their families. The first goal is to provide good nutrition for all family members. Meal managers can use a meal pattern based on MyPyramid as a resource to help meet this goal.

The second goal is to use planned spending. A family must consider factors that affect food needs and food purchases when preparing a household budget. A meal manager can use his or her consumer skills to reduce food expenses and stay within the established budget.

The third goal of meal management is to prepare satisfying meals. Meal managers must be mindful of family food preferences to achieve this goal. They must also consider flavors, colors, textures, shapes, sizes, and temperatures of foods. This will help them plan menus that are varied and appealing.

The fourth meal management goal is to control the use of time and energy. Meal managers can use a number of resources as alternatives to time and energy. They can use convenience foods and work simplification techniques to reduce the time they spend planning and preparing meals. Meal managers can use appliances efficiently and recycle to conserve fuel energy and other resources in the kitchen.

Review What You Have Read

Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Name six resources a meal manager can use to reach goals related to preparing and serving food.
2. What portion of a day’s total nutrient intake do breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks generally supply?

3. What is usually the first step in planning a menu?
4. True or false. All families with similar food needs spend about the same amount of money for food.
5. List four factors that help determine the amount of money a meal manager spends for food.
6. Describe the steps you would take to estimate the amount of money you could spend for food each week.
7. Which of the following statements about food costs is not true?
   A. Dried milk costs less than fluid fresh milk.
   B. During off-seasons, canned fruits and vegetables cost less than fresh.
   C. Store brands cost less than national brands.
   D. Presweetened cereals cost less than unsweetened cereals.
8. List the six elements that affect the sensory appeal of a meal. Give examples of foods that show contrast for each element.
9. Explain how eating out can help meal managers meet all four meal management goals.
10. Convenience foods that are ready for eating either immediately or after simply heating or thawing are called _____.
11. Describe three ways a meal manager can simplify tasks.
12. Give two suggestions for conserving fuel energy and one suggestion for conserving water in the kitchen.
Build Your Basic Skills

1. **Math.** Compare the costs of foods with built-in convenience with their less convenient counterparts. Examples might include shredded cheese and bulk cheese, instant rice and long grain rice, and ready-made juice and frozen concentrate.

2. **Verbal.** Visit the school cafeteria or a nearby foodservice operation and observe employees involved in food preparation. What work simplification techniques do you see employees using? How could employees make better use of work simplification techniques? Share your findings in a brief oral report to the class.

Build Your Thinking Skills

1. **Evaluate.** Keep track of all the meals you have eaten for one week. Evaluate the meals according to MyPyramid. If each day’s meals were not nutritionally balanced, suggest where you could have added or subtracted menu items to provide the recommended daily amounts.

2. **Analyze.** Write menus for your family’s meals for a week. Attach the menus to a report analyzing how they meet the four goals of meal management.

Apply Technology

1. Use a computer and a recipe Web site or program to plan meals for one week.

2. Use a computer and a spreadsheet program to prepare a monthly budget. Then use the budget to analyze your family’s food spending.

Using Workplace Skills

Emilio owns a catering business. People hire him and his staff to prepare food and bring it to their homes or rented banquet halls. Many people also ask Emilio to stay and serve the food to their party guests. Many of Emilio’s clients order fancy foods, such as shrimp cocktail and exotic fruits. They want the foods to be expertly seasoned and beautifully garnished. They often insist on ordering more than enough food to feed the expected number of guests. All these factors add to the catering bill. However, most of the clients have limited budgets.

To be an effective worker, Emilio needs skill in making good use of money. Put yourself in Emilio’s place and answer the following questions about your need for and use of this skill:

A. What are four expenses you must consider when deciding how much to charge your clients?

B. How might your clients react if you exceed their budgets?

C. What would happen if you underestimate your expenses when billing clients?

D. What is another skill you would need in this job? Briefly explain why this skill would be important.