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Just In

DASH Diet Supports Food as Medicine

Following a sodium-restricted DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet may benefit heart failure patients, supporting the concept of “food as medicine,” which assumes that improving nutrition can lead to important physiologic results, according to research. These positive secondary findings came from a study of 66 patients at least 55-years old who had been discharged from hospitalization for acute decompensated heart failure. For four weeks, half received usual care and half received usual care plus home-delivery DASH meals providing less than 1500 milligrams of sodium per day. After 12 weeks, the number of hospitalizations and the number of days in the hospital were significantly lower for the DASH dieters. 

Heart Failure Society of America Annual Scientific Meeting, September 2017

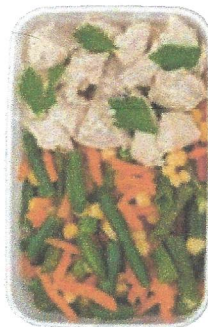
Healthy Eating Is Easy with Meal Prep

These 4 smart meal prep strategies can lead to easy, healthful meals.

Meal prepping or “meal prep” is a popular cooking trend that can save money and time while improving nutritional intake. The process of meal prepping involves making a larger batch of a recipe, and pre-portioning the meals into grab-and-go containers to store in the fridge or freezer for quick, ready-prepared meals later on in the week. This practice is gaining momentum as time-starved individuals are looking for healthy, home-cooked alternatives to fast food, take-out, and even meal kit delivery programs.

Ninety-eight percent of Americans say that cooking at home is the preferred way to prepare a meal, per a 2016 *ReportLinker* survey. The survey also found that nearly one-third of home cooks prefer to use their own recipes, which may explain the increasing popularity of the modern day meal prepping phenomenon sweeping the nation. There may be health benefits, too. Studies show that meal planning—a core part of meal prepping—is associated with a healthier diet, more food variety, and lower odds of being overweight, according to a 2017 study in the *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition*.

Meal prepping doesn’t have to be complicated. Toby Amidor, RD, CDE, author of *The Healthy Meal Prep Cookbook*, suggests “creatively reusing recipes for meal prep,” such as re-purposing a recipe for barbecue chicken to make pizza. And meal prepping doesn’t need to be reserved for planning lunches and dinners; it can be a great tool to maximize healthy breakfast meals too.




Prep balanced meals with lean protein, vegetables, and whole grains.

Healthy Meal Prep Tips. Here are some tips to help you get started with meal prep success.

1 Start with Easy Recipes. Make meals enjoyable by choosing familiar and easy-to-make recipes with healthful ingredients you are likely to have on hand. Try to include a healthy protein (fish, lean meats, beans, tofu), whole grain (farro, brown rice, sorghum), vegetable (peas, cauliflower, greens), and healthy fats (avocado, walnuts, olives) in each meal. Balancing meals with protein, carbohydrates and fats will help satisfy hunger while maximizing nutrition.

2 Choose a Day to Meal Prep. In addition to creating a shopping list in advance, planning one day per week to prep and cook meals when you have more time, such as on the weekend or days off, will optimize success.

3 Consider Storage. Look for individual, reusable stackable meal containers for meal prep. Many people prefer glass containers, as they can go easily from refrigerator to oven (toaster, conventional or microwave).

4 Boost Vegetable Intake. Include canned, frozen, or fresh vegetables in all meals. Making a conscious effort to include them in your meal prepping will enhance the nutritional quality of meals and likely impact your overall health in the long run. 

—Barbara Ruhs, MS, RDN

