

# Healthy Meal Planning Worksheet

PA CareKit



Eating a balanced diet can help older adults stay strong, maintain energy, and support overall health. This worksheet can assist with planning simple, nutritious meals for the week. It explains the main food groups, offers examples of what counts in each group, and provides a planning table to create balanced breakfasts, lunches, dinners, and snacks each day.

## Food Groups and Other Essentials

**Protein:** Aim to include protein at each meal to maintain strength. Examples include eggs, seafood, lean beef, chicken, turkey, beans, nuts, tofu, lentils. Protein can be supplemented with nutritional shakes, especially if chewing is a challenge.

**Grains:** Whole grains are especially important for fiber intake. Examples include whole-grain bread, brown rice, oatmeal, quinoa, whole-wheat pasta, and cereal.

**Vegetables:** Try to include at least one vegetable with lunch and dinner. Examples include fresh, canned, or frozen foods like carrots, broccoli, spinach, green beans, tomatoes, or peppers.

**Fruits:** Fruits are often incorporated into breakfast, or as easy snacks that add vitamins and fiber to the diet. Examples include fresh, frozen, or canned foods like apples, bananas, berries, melon, peaches, fruit juices, dried fruits, or fruit sauces.

**Dairy:** Dairy is important for calcium intake, which promotes bone health. Examples include milk, yogurt, and cottage cheese.

**Fats:** Choose small amounts of unsaturated fats, especially when cooking other parts of a meal. Examples include olive oil, nuts, seeds, avocado, and fatty fish such as salmon.

**Fluids:** Older adults may forget to drink, which can lead to dehydration, especially with certain medications. Avoid sugary drinks like soda and include water, tea, milk, juice, or low sodium broth.

## Foods to Avoid or Limit

List any foods the older adult should avoid because of health conditions, allergies, or medications. Consult with a doctor, pharmacist, or Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) for guidance.

**High Salt Foods:** \_\_\_\_\_

**High Sugar Foods:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Foods that Interfere with Medications:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other:** \_\_\_\_\_



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## Weekly Menu Planner

Use this table to plan and track meals and foods throughout the week.

Day of the Week	Meal	Protein	Grain	Vegetable	Fruit	Other	Notes
Monday	Breakfast						
	Lunch						
	Dinner						
Tuesday	Breakfast						
	Lunch						
	Dinner						
Wednesday	Breakfast						
	Lunch						
	Dinner						
Thursday	Breakfast						
	Lunch						
	Dinner						
Friday	Breakfast						
	Lunch						
	Dinner						
Saturday	Breakfast						
	Lunch						
	Dinner						
Sunday	Breakfast						
	Lunch						
	Dinner						

Source: <https://myplate-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/2024-07/MyPlate-Plan-Menu-Template.pdf>

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