



GS4

GROCERY SHOPPING

# Weekly Meal Plan Made Easy

*Time: 70 Minutes*

Discover how you can plan a week of healthy meals even with a tight schedule and budget. We will start with healthy recipes and then build our weekly plan and shopping lists while learning how to take advantage of sales and coupons. Meal planning will help you choose fresh, seasonal produce, maintain your pantry and enjoy nutritious meals throughout the week.

## OBJECTIVES:

Create a weekly meal plan and grocery list. Each participant will make one for their household.

Describe how to plan ahead and what to do while at the grocery store.

## SETUP

- Review resource list and print it out. Purchase all necessary supplies after reviewing the [HFL Cost Calculator](#).
- Place circulars at demo station.
- Provide computer, internet access, and projector, if available.

## INTRO (10 Minutes)

- Welcome participants and introduce yourself.
- Take care of any housekeeping items (closest bathroom, water fountain, etc.).
- Give a brief description of the educational experience.
- Engage in an icebreaker to gauge topic knowledge from the bank of options provided in the [Welcome Toolkit](#).

## DEMO (10 Minutes)

- Play video(s) or demonstrate content (see demo script).

## ACTIVITY (20 Minutes)

- Participants will explore various healthy recipes and create a weekly meal plan and grocery list for their household.

## RECAP (10 Minutes)

- Pass out handout(s) and review them together.

## GOAL SETTING/CLOSING (20 Minutes)

- Engage in a goal setting activity from the bank of options provided in the [Welcome Toolkit](#). Pass out the Setting SMART Goals handout to participants.
- Thank participants and encourage them to join the next activity. (Provide date/time/location if known.)



NOTES: Read legal liability disclaimer before activity: [Food Liability Disclaimer](#). Refer to Resource List for all necessary supplies and handouts. This Healthy for Life® Educational Experience was created by Aramark and the American Heart Association as part of our Healthy for Life® 20 By 20 Initiative. We are proud to be working together to help improve the health of all Americans.

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# Weekly Meal Plan Made Easy Resource List

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## HANDOUTS/VIDEOS

Find these resources on AHA's YouTube channel or [heart.org/healthyforgood](http://heart.org/healthyforgood)

- Article – [Eat Healthy on a Budget by Planning Ahead](#)
- Article – [Meal Planning: The High Fiber Factor](#)
- Article – [Benefits & How To's of Family Dinners](#)
- Guide – [Grocery Guide](#) (Optional)

Find these resources in this lesson

- Handout – [Shop Smart and Save](#)
- Handout – [Sample Grocery List](#)
- Handout – [Setting SMART Goals](#)

## SPACE SETUP

- Chairs and tables for participants
- Pens for participants
- Folders
- Computer, internet access, and projector, if available

## ACTIVITY SUPPLIES\*

- Local circulars
- Calendar for the next week (or a simple sheet of paper with columns or rows labeled Monday-Sunday)
- Blank sheets of lined paper
- Pens

\*Purchase appropriate number of supplies for your participants. Participants can divide into teams and share supplies.

# Weekly Meal Plan Made Easy Demo Script

Use if video capabilities are unavailable.



**SAY:**

Smart shopping on a budget means knowing what to buy and when. Today, you'll learn how to shop smart and save.



**The first step is to plan ahead:**

As food prices keep rising, shopping for nutritious food on a budget becomes more challenging. The good news is that healthy eating can actually cost less. By creating a food budget, planning menus and shopping wisely, you can save money and enjoy delicious, nutritious meals!



**When you're serving a new recipe for the first time:**

- Cook once and eat twice. When you're cooking, try doubling the ingredients to make enough for two meals. Use the recipe's suggested serving amount (1½ cups per serving, as an example) to divide up the finished dish, so family members eat the right number of calories. Freeze what's left from what you've cooked to use for a future meal. What a great way to save time and money and reduce food waste!
- After you serve a new recipe for the first time, note on the recipe about how much food was left over, if any.



Plan your meals each week and make sure to keep recipes, grocery lists, receipts and coupons in one place to make planning easier.



Make a shopping list with specific details. Note the quantity needed and which coupons you have. Going to the store without a list often means you're more likely to spend money on impulse buys and waste time wandering.



Know what you have and inventory your pantry each week. You may find it helpful to organize your list the same way that the grocery store is organized. For example, list all of the fresh produce items together, all of the frozen items together, etc.



Save receipts. Each week, compare what you've spent to what you budgeted.



Collect coupons. Finding what is on sale for the week can spark ideas about what to cook. Keep grocery store circulars or ads and check the front of your local grocery store for coupons. Find some way to note the items you have a coupon for. For example, put a star next to them on your list. Then you won't forget to use your coupons.



**Boost your savings:**

Sign up for rewards/loyalty memberships at your favorite grocery stores. You'll automatically receive savings when your card or barcode is scanned at checkout. You'll get emails about specials and deals, too.



Be sure to check out the wide variety of apps that can save you money on groceries. Most of them are free! Each is set up differently, but they're all designed to save you money and time. These apps can:

- Allow you to virtually "clip" coupons and store them in the app
- Turn photos of coupons into scannable barcodes you can use at checkout
- Alert you about price reductions and coupon expiration dates
- Enable you to share coupons with your family and friends
- Compare pricing by store for ingredients
- Direct you to the nearest grocery store with the cheapest price for a given ingredient
- Create a grocery list from a meal plan or recipe
- Send you cash back when you scan your receipts

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## Weekly Meal Plan Made Easy Demo Script (Continued)

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### **SAY:**

#### **While you're at the store:**

- Compare prices. Store-brand products may be more affordable.
- Use coupons, but compare prices and nutrition facts. A coupon may not always be the best deal or the healthiest option.
- Buy in bulk. You may save money. Just be sure you have room in your pantry or freezer.
- Buy produce that's in season. Fresh fruits and vegetables will last for about a week. Remember, though, that canned or frozen fruits and vegetables will last longer, may be less expensive and can be just as healthy.
- Don't check out at the checkout! Pay attention at the register to make certain you receive all your discounts and savings.

## Weekly Meal Plan Made Easy Activity Script

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Pass out a calendar for the next week (or a sheet of paper with columns or rows labeled Monday-Sunday), pens, and blank sheets of lined paper to write a grocery list. Or, use the [Sample Grocery List](#) [handout](#) included in the lesson.

Place a pile of circulars from local stores at the demo station, as well as any coupon books or flyers that are available.

Invite participants to grab a circular and instruct them to spend some time reviewing the circulars to get an idea of what is seasonal and what is on sale and to also find ideas for meals. They may have some family recipes in mind or you can provide some printed AHA recipes. Or, look at [Healthy for Good Recipes](#) for ideas.



**SAY:**

Plan as many dinner meals as you have time for this week and make a grocery list with all of the necessary ingredients. Fill in the days of the week with the dishes you plan to prepare.



Remember you may be able to use leftovers on one or more days.

Once all participants have finished filling out their weekly meal plan and grocery list, invite them to share with the people around them.



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# Shop Smart & Save

Smart shopping on a budget means knowing what to buy and when.

## PLAN AHEAD



### Sign up for a reward card

Sign up for a reward card (loyalty program) with your grocery store(s). Scan the card as you check out to receive deals automatically.



### Use coupons and coupon apps

Collect coupons. With a reward card, you will get email coupons and can download online coupons. Use coupon apps.



### Know what you have

Inventory your pantry and refrigerator each week.



### Plan meals each week

Keep recipes, grocery lists, receipts and coupons in one place to make planning easier.



### Make a shopping list

Be specific with descriptions. Note the quantity needed and which coupons you have.



### Save receipts

For each week, compare what you spent to what you budgeted. Adjust your meal planning and budgeting if necessary.

## AT THE GROCERY STORE



### Compare prices

Store-brand products may be more affordable.



### Use coupons, but compare prices and nutrition facts.

A coupon may not always be the best deal or the healthiest option.



### Buy in bulk

You may save money. Just be sure you have room to store what you've bought in your pantry or freezer.



### Save with seasonal produce

Buying produce that's in season can save you money. Can or freeze it for year-round use.



### Don't check out at the checkout

Pay attention at the register to make sure you get all your discounts and savings.



For more smart shopping tips, visit [heart.org/healthyforgood](https://heart.org/healthyforgood).

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This sample grocery list can help you make healthier choices when you shop. Add the quantity you need next to each item, and check if you have a coupon. Planning ahead will help you save time and money! Remember to compare labels and choose products with the lowest amount of sodium, added sugars and saturated fat and no trans fat that you can find in your store.

	Quantity	Coupon
<b>Fresh Vegetables</b>		
Asparagus		
Broccoli		
Carrots		
Cauliflower		
Celery		
Corn		
Cucumbers		
Lettuce/Greens		
Onions		
Peppers		
Potatoes		
Spinach		
Squash		
Sweet potatoes		
Tomatoes		
Zucchini		
<b>Fresh Fruits</b>		
Apples		
Avocados		
Bananas		
Berries		
Cherries		
Grapefruit		
Grapes		
Kiwis		
Lemons/Limes		
Melon		
Oranges		
Peaches		
Pears		
Plums		
<b>Canned/Dry Beans</b>		
Black beans		
Chickpeas		
Kidney beans		
Lima beans		
Pinto beans		
White beans		

	Quantity	Coupon
<b>Frozen Vegetables</b>		
Broccoli		
Cauliflower		
Corn		
Green beans		
Mixed vegetables		
Spinach		
<b>Frozen Fruits</b>		
Berries		
Cherries		
Mixed fruit		
Peaches		
<b>Canned Vegetables</b>		
Corn		
Green beans		
Mixed vegetables		
Peas		
Tomatoes		
Tomato paste/sauce		
Yams		
<b>Canned/Jarred/ Dried Fruits</b>		
Apple sauce		
Apricots		
Dates		
Mixed fruit		
Oranges		
Peaches		
Pineapple		
Prunes		
Raisins		

## Sample Grocery List (Continued)

	Quantity	Coupon
<b>Whole Grains</b>		
Bread		
Brown rice		
Cereal		
Couscous		
Oatmeal		
Pasta		
Quinoa		
Tortillas		
<b>Fresh/Frozen Meat &amp; Seafood</b>		
Chicken breasts		
Lean ground beef/turkey		
Lunch meats		
Salmon		
White fish fillets		
<b>Canned/Pouched Meat &amp; Seafood</b>		
Chicken		
Salmon		
Tuna		
<b>Pantry Staples</b>		
Nut butters (peanut, almond)		
Nuts (almonds, walnuts)		
Salsa		
Soups and broths		
Spaghetti sauce		
<b>Cooking/Baking Essentials</b>		
Extra Virgin Olive Oil		
Flour (whole wheat)		
Non-stick cooking spray		
Vegetable/canola oil		
Vinegars		

	Quantity	Coupon
<b>Herbs/Spices &amp; Seasonings</b>		
Basil		
Cilantro		
Garlic		
Mint		
Parsley		
Pepper (black, cayenne, red)		
Salt-free seasoning blend		
<b>Dairy (Low-fat/Fat-free)</b>		
Cheese		
Eggs/egg whites		
Milk		
Yogurt		
<b>Cleaning Supplies &amp; Miscellaneous</b>		



Look for the Heart-Check mark to quickly and easily identify foods that can be part of a heart-healthy eating plan.



## **SPECIFIC**

- What exactly do you want to accomplish?

## **MEASURABLE**

- How will you track your progress towards your goal?

## **ACHIEVABLE**

- Is reaching your goal possible with your full effort?

## **REALISTIC**

- Do you have the resources and ability to achieve your goal? If not, how can you get them?

## **TIME-BOUND**

- When will your goal be achieved?

## **EXAMPLE OF A SMART GOAL:**

I will increase the number of fruit servings I eat daily by 2 cups within the next 3 months.

Personal SMART goal:

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