



MASTERING MEAL PREP FOR A HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE

Planning and preparing your meals in advance isn't just a time-saver – it's a game-changer for your wallet and your well-being, and contributes to a healthier lifestyle. We chat with an expert to get the lowdown on the art of meal prep.

Maintaining a balanced and healthy diet can be challenging. Fortunately, meal prepping provides a practical solution and helps take the worry out of our daily 'what's for dinner' concerns. We spoke to Monique Bailey, a Clinical, Renal and Paediatric dietician at Dieticians @Health, to gain insights into streamlining nutrition for busy lives.

BRIGHTEN UP YOUR PLATE

Try to eat well-balanced meals that incorporate protein, resistant starches like brown rice, legumes and sweet potato, and a variety of fresh, colourful vegetables. Monique Bailey suggests a nutritious crunchy salad recipe that can be prepped in advance, making it an ideal lunch option. 'Meal prepping prevents us from choosing unhealthy meal solutions,' she adds.

BATCH-COOK OVER THE WEEKEND

Busy lifestyles often lead to skipping meals or choosing unhealthy options. Monique recommends establishing a

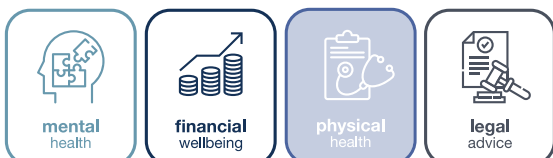
weekly meal-prepping routine to avoid nutritional pitfalls and maintain a well-rounded, healthy diet. 'Plan for the week ahead by doing batch cooking over the weekend,' Monique advises.

SWAP OUT RICH INGREDIENTS FOR HEALTHIER OPTIONS

Avoid consuming mayonnaise-rich, cheese-heavy, and overly saucy meals. Substitute processed or smoked meats with healthier protein sources like boiled eggs, chicken breasts, or legumes. 'This is where a dietician can help guide you by giving you meal inspiration to suit your taste and lifestyle,' she adds.

STAY DISCIPLINED TO REACH YOUR HEALTH GOALS

Meal prepping gets you closer to achieving specific nutritional goals, such as regulating blood pressure, lowering cholesterol, and improving body composition. 'The only way to achieve these kinds of goals is by being more disciplined with what you put into your body. Make small but impactful changes to your food choices and establish habits that work for you,' Monique says.



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PRIORITISE 'FRESH' OVER 'FAST'

Monique recommends legumes, crunchy vegetables, and lean protein sources like chicken or tuna as cost-effective, nutritious staples for meal prep. She also recommends prioritising fresh foods over processed alternatives. 'Avoid buying 'diet' products; focus on fresh foods and steer clear of processed items,' Monique adds.

RESEARCH TIME-SAVING TECHNIQUES

'Set aside some time every week to devise a menu. The more you do it, the easier it'll become, and you'll also learn what worked and what didn't from previous meal-prepping sessions. You'll notice that some of the ingredients needed for meal prep will become common household items when you get into the habit. Something as simple as 'eggs in a basket' can be a quick breakfast solution and shave off time spent in front of the stove,' she says.

PORTION YOUR MEALS FOR EASY ACCESS

Monique recommends storing prepped meals in glassware, portioning them into separate containers for each day of the week. 'This method ensures freshness, easy access, and optimal portion sizes. I recommend using uniform containers sized around 350-400 ml.'

HEALTHY DOESN'T MEAN BLAND

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Try this recipe



EGG IN A BASKET

MAKES 12 EGG BASKETS

INGREDIENTS

1 cup tomatoes, chopped
1 cup fresh spinach, chopped
12 large eggs
2 T feta, crumbled
12 unsalted crackers, crushed
4 T margarine
4 T milk
Salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

1. Preheat a 12 cup muffin pan. Place 1 margarine in each cup.
2. Mix the eggs, tomatoes, spinach, feta, crackers, salt and pepper in a separate bowl.
3. Distribute the egg mixture evenly into each muffin cup. Pour 1 T milk over each egg mix.
4. Bake at 180°C for 12-15 minutes until the eggs are cooked to desired firmness.

DIETITIANS DO PREVENTION

SASPW members and registered dietitians Tsubota Mwanani, Amelgling Tapoto and Denise Coleman from the South West University (SWU) created this recipe.

Easy to make breakfast on the go! These egg baskets are nutrient dense and low in lipids. This means that they can be included in a healthy diet to control cholesterol and prevent unwanted weight gain. They are ideal for patients undergoing rehabilitation from disease as they are high in protein, easy to chew and swallow.

A higher protein diet during the rehabilitation phase may prevent muscle mass loss. Loss of lean tissue during illness is one of the major risk factors for poor health outcomes and increases a patient's risk for infections and complications.



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