



NOURISH AT HOME

A DIETITIAN'S GUIDE TO
HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE MEALS FOR THE FAMILY

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WELCOME TO OUR GUIDE



Create nutritious meals for yourself and your family, using fresh, minimally processed, earth-friendly ingredients

Food not only sustains life, it creates quality of life! Food should not feel restrictive, it should not evoke negative emotions in us. **The more we allow ourselves the food we love, the more we can enjoy!**

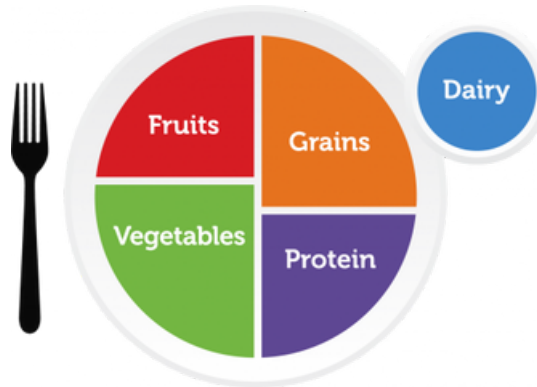
Learning to prepare the foods we love will nourish us properly, care for our family, care for the planet, and connect us with what we eat. You may be asking yourself “ok that sounds great, but how can that be me?”

This guide breaks down how to build a lifestyle and establish a home environment that enables you to create nutritious meals for yourself and your family using fresh, minimally processed earth-friendly ingredients. The goal is to provide you with the guidance and support to design a plan that works for you! The hardest part of making sustainable changes to your lifestyle is getting started. It always begins with planning.

Don't get overwhelmed! Go through this guide slowly, at your own pace, to avoid feeling overwhelmed. Aim for small, specific, and achievable goals.

WHAT IS A BALANCED MEAL?

The “balanced plate” offers an easy-to-follow method for meeting your needs. It focuses on including more plants in your daily diet and provides portion sizing through using your plate.



THE BALANCED PLATE

*The diagram represents a balanced meal plate as follows:

- **Vegetables and/or fruit should be 1/2 your plate**
- **Whole grain or starchy vegetables should be 1/4 of your plate.** These include foods such as beans, legumes, potatoes, brown rice, whole-grain pasta, and whole-grain bread.
- **The last 1/4 of your plate should be lean protein.** This can be meat, poultry, fish, soy, eggs, or low-fat dairy.

It's also important to include a **calcium source** at your meals such as a fortified food, soy, or dairy. Lastly, add a small quantity of **healthy fat** such as olive oil, olives, nuts, seeds, avocado, and fatty fish.

Before you start your meal, look at your plate, take attendance -
“is everyone here?”

NUTRITION & THE LIFECYCLE

Source: Brown, J. E. (2007). *Nutrition Through the Life Cycle*. Wadsworth Publishing.



Fertility/Preconception

During this stage the focus is **maintaining a healthy body weight, and staying properly nourished to improve chances of fertility and to prepare for pregnancy.** Emphasizing the need for a general healthy lifestyle, and following the guidelines of the balanced plate to ensure meeting energy, carbohydrate, fat, and protein needs, as well as **prenatal essential micronutrients such as folate and iron.**



Pregnancy

Although the 3 trimesters all have different focuses, the running theme is to **be mindful of protein intake, fiber, and healthy fats, as well as the micronutrients with increased needs** such as iron, folate, calcium, vitamin D, vitamin A and vitamin C. The balanced meal provides the support and structure to keep this all as part of your meals.



Postpartum

This is the time for **replenishing your nutrient stores** after they were heavily drained during pregnancy. Similar to during fertility/preconception. Postpartum is where the practical application of a healthy lifestyle shifts and the balanced plate can help **reestablish what your lifestyle** is now without starting completely from scratch.



Infancy and Childhood

Despite the fact that needs of children are not the same as parents, the idea that you are **exposing your children to a wide variety of whole, fresh, minimally processed ingredients is essential to their growth and development,** as well as building healthy habits for life. Again the balanced plate can offer a structure to parents as they are working to prepare meals for their growing family.

PUT IT INTO PLAY!

Meal planning can be broken down into 4 steps: Plan, Shop, Prep, and Cook



The first step is to PLAN. Having a plan means we don't have to decide in the moment what to eat or figure out how to pull it together on the spot. This puts you in control of the amount of time and details that go into the meals you will enjoy. As part of this stage, we will briefly discuss **setting up your home for success in the long term, making it easy to plan and prep for you and your family week to week.**

First, take stock of your home. What to consider?





- 1. What cooking equipment do you have?** Pots? Pans? Utensils? What more do you need and what more do you want?
 - a. Basic essential equipment to consider:** stovetop, oven, microwave, food processor, cutting boards & knives, measuring cups & spoons, pots & pans of various sizes, and storage containers
- 2. How much storage space do you have?** How much more do you need? Will more fit? What accessories/containers do you need to organize and store your essentials?
- 3. What non-perishables, such as spices and baking ingredients, do you have?** What more do you need?
 - a. Here is a list of common items to keep on hand in the home:** Salt - kosher salt & fine salt, ground black pepper, garlic powder, chili powder, rosemary, thyme, basil, oregano, onion powder, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda, flour, and vanilla extract.
 - b. Stock your spice rack!** Flavor is everything when it comes to consistently making delicious meals at home. Don't be shy to identify what flavors you and your family like - then stock up.
- Lastly, I recommend **having an inventory of your food and equipment.** This can be done as a running form.

YOUR WEEKLY MENU

Now it's time to make a weekly menu. **The menu should reflect preferences and nutritional needs.** Menus can be adjusted season by season - to include what is in the market and what tastes freshest. In the following section, you will find meal ideas for each season. Each meal emphasizes ingredients that address needs for all stages mentioned in "The Balanced Meal" section".* **I recommend starting with your protein when building your meals from there, let the other ingredients fall into place around your protein.** For instance, if you choose eggs as your protein you will decide what pairs well with eggs, like toast or potatoes, and sauteed greens. The season can further guide your creativity in building the meal and keeping your meals diverse throughout the year.







Breakfast

-  Homemade apple jam in oatmeal made with soy milk, add in sliced bananas, diced pear, and chopped walnuts
-  Potato hash with kale, red pepper, and onion. Plus eggs cooked your way
-  Greek yogurt bowl with strawberries and raspberries, homemade granola with toasted almonds and a drizzle of honey
-  Whole grain bread (toasted) with mashed avocado, shaved parmesan, sliced cucumbers and tomato, and eggs cooked your way







Dinner

-  Baked ziti made with whole wheat pasta, ricotta & parmesan cheese, red sauce, carrots, onion, and celery
-  Lentil chili made with red pepper, onion, portobello mushrooms, beans, and tomatoes
-  Brown rice topped with sautéed tofu, scallions, snap peas, julienned peppers, and an olive oil vinaigrette
-  Tacos with mango salsa (mango, red onion, cilantro, and diced pepper), guacamole, and steak/chicken/tofu/fish/seafood/beans







Lunch

-  Curly kale salad with roasted sweet potato, red onion, pumpkin seeds, feta cheese, and a olive oil dressing
-  Tuna (mixed with lite mayo, diced green apple, raisins and a drizzle of honey), in a whole wheat tortilla wrap with diced tomatoes and lettuce
-  Pea pesto on whole wheat pasta with roasted asparagus, sautéed spinach, and grilled chicken
-  Homemade bruschetta salad, on top of greek yogurt, diced cucumbers and avocado, and whole wheat pita chips for dipping



Snack

-  Roasted beet chips and hummus
-  Grapefruit and popcorn
-  Cottage cheese with berry jam & fruit
-  Watermelon, cucumber, and feta cheese



TIME TO SHOP

Once your menu/plan is set, you're ready to create a **grocery list**. It's recommended to create organized lists (see below) for each of your menus and over time you will simply need to replenish perishable items and some non-perishable items.

Consider the following:

1. **To avoid food waste** you will want to be specific. This may require some trial and error.
 - a. **How will it be stored?** This can prevent excessive food waste. Think how it is stored in the grocery, that is how you are meant to store it at home.
 - Items such as greens and berries will be refrigerated, they don't last long. Items like cucumbers, tomatoes, and peppers don't need the refrigerator, but keeping them cold will extend their shelf life.
 - There is also the option to freeze items to help lengthen their shelf life. This can be done for such items as berries and cheese.
 - Don't hesitate to buy canned or frozen produce from the grocery if it supports creating these plant-forward meals.
 - b. **Write your list down!** It can be a note on your phone, you can use an app, or just pen and paper - whatever works for you! The goal is to keep this task low burden. Your shopping list will keep you focused, prevent over or under-buying, and be a time saver in the store.
 - c. **Organize your shopping list according to how your store is organized.**
 - Most groceries have the produce right in the front, and dairy/perishables along the side and/or in the back. The middle aisles are going to be your non-perishables, supplies, etc. **Below is a sample template.**
 - d. **Once you arrive home - before putting ingredients away- take a look at your plan.** What did you decide you were going to do when? What needs to be put away now? And what will you prepare right away?

Produce

- Tomatoes
- Peppers
- Lettuce
- Apples
- Bananas

Dairy +Cold

- Milk
- Yogurt
- Cheese
- Eggs

Freezer

- Frozen fruit
- frozen veggies

Non-perishables

- Pasta
- Rice
- Bread
- Peanut butter
- Salt

Non-food

- Paper towels
- Aluminum foil
- Dish soap

PREP & COOK

Prep is a rhythm.

- **When tackling a recipe, start with chopping and cutting your produce.** Then gather the other ingredients and equipment, like bowls, spoons, and cups.
- **The first few times you work on a recipe, you will rely on having the directions in front of you to help you follow the steps.** The more times you prepare a meal, the easier and faster it will be to complete it. Over time, as you become comfortable with a particular menu item, time and energy will be saved.

Go with your gut!

- Part of growing confidence in the kitchen is **learning what dishes taste, smell, feel, and look like, and even getting to know their sounds!** As you become familiar with it all, you will **build the confidence to go with your gut** when you need to make a decision or remedy a mistake in the kitchen.
- **You will inevitably make a mistake when cooking and baking, it's part of the process!** But there are ways to reverse course or correct a mistake - the more familiar you become with how food cooks and bakes, the better you are prepared to fix at these times.





REFLECT & REVIEW

The cool thing about healthy behavior is that it is meant to change over time. As you and your body change, as your family changes, so does healthy behavior. We are not perfect, imperfection is what makes us human. We create a plan, and then as we implement it there may be multiple iterations to the point where it looks nothing like how we originally planned - this helps us better reflect on what works for us.

Take the time to reflect and review the plan you created and see what needs to be adapted and adjusted based on what you learned from trial and error.

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About THE AUTHOR

Aderet Dana Hoch is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) and Certified Dietitian-Nutritionist (CDN), in New York and Israel. Aderet holds a Bachelor's degree in Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health from NYU and a Master's degree in Nutrition Education from Columbia University. In her work with clients, Aderet's practice, Dining with Nature, takes a natural approach to nutrition. **Aderet works with women throughout their maternal journey, from planning for parenthood to navigating those first few years.** Her practice specializes in preconception, pregnancy, postpartum, and pediatrics. Aderet also provides counseling for a wide range of health conditions including weight management, diabetes, high blood pressure, and GI issues. Together we set realistic goals to improve your health, explore food you enjoy, and connect with body, for a more earth-friendly and sustainable lifestyle.



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