MEAL PLANNING

Each nutrient has a different purpose:

- Carbohydrate provides bulk and quick energy from 20 minutes to 2 hours after eating.
- Protein has little bulk and provides intermediate energy from 2-3 hours after eating.
- Fat has no bulk and provides long-lasting energy from 3-5 hours after eating.

**Carbohydrate Sources:**
fruit, bread, rice, potatoes, vegetables, sugar, flour, cereal, milk, pasta, dried beans, crackers

**Protein Sources:**
meat, cheese, nuts, milk, tofu, dried beans, eggs

**Fat Sources:**
oil, shortening, margarine, salad dressing, milkfat, cheese, nuts, bacon, cream cheese

**To get a combination of carbohydrate, protein and fat, include in each meal (breakfast, lunch, and dinner):**
⇒ milk or milk product
⇒ an additional source of protein
⇒ a source of grain or starch
⇒ a fruit or vegetable or both
⇒ an additional source of fat

Balanced meals provide energy for 3-5 hours. Snacks may be needed if meals are far apart.

**Three balanced meals daily:**
⇒ prevent cravings
⇒ increase metabolism
⇒ increase satisfaction
⇒ allow weight management
⇒ ensure good nutrition

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Arobin3@unl.edu  Information reformatted from information by Karen Creswell MS, RD, LMNT, Lincoln Center Physicians (formerly Mutual of Omaha Health Plans of Lincoln.)
EXAMPLES OF SMALL MEALS

Start with small balanced meals and increase meal size if necessary. Expect to be hungry at 3-5 hour intervals when you have arrived at the appropriate meal size. Hunger within an hour of getting up in the morning indicates no overeating in the previous day. Include snacks only if you are hungry for them or when meals are more than 5 hours apart. Adjust portion sizes so that you are hungry at 1 meals and snacks.

**Balanced breakfast ideas:**
* 1 egg, 1 slice cheese, 1 slice buttered toast, and ½ cup of juice
* ½ cup of cereal, ¼ cup of slivered almonds, ½ cup of fruit, and milk
* 1 buttered pancake, strawberries, 1 slice of ham, and 1 cup of milk
* ½ bagel, cream cheese, 1 slice of turkey, 1 slice of cheese, ½ piece of fruit
* 2/3 cup of cottage cheese, ½ cup fruit, and 1 slice buttered toast
* 1 breakfast burrito, served with salsa
* 1 breakfast bar, 1 hard boiled egg, a small can of fruit juice, and 1 carton of yogurt
* scrambled eggs with cheese, ½ sweet roll, and ½ cup juice
* 2/3 cup trail mix with dried fruit and nuts and a carton of milk

**Balanced lunch and dinner ideas:**
* 1 cup of casserole and ½ cup fruit
* small salad, croutons, shredded meat and cheese and a small amount of regular salad dressing
* ½ sandwich, 1 cup soup, and ½ cup pudding
* ½ sandwich, ½ piece of fruit and a cookie
* 1 slice of pizza and small salad with dressing
* 6-12 nacho chips with meat, cheese and salsa
* 1 meat portion(size of a deck of cards), ½ cup mashed potatoes and gravy made with milk and ½ cup vegetables with margarine
* 1 meat portion, ½ cup vegetables with cheese sauce and a small brownie

**Meal or snack ideas to use when balanced meals are not possible (each example contains a combination of carbohydrate, protein, and fat to make the meal or snack satisfying):**
* milk and 2 cookies of ½ monster cookie
* milk and a doughnut
* milk and a small slice of cake
* slices of fresh fruit and 1 slice of cheese
* slices of fresh fruit and peanut butter
* peanut butter and 4 snack crackers
* peanut butter on a celery stick
* peanut candy bar
* 1 scoop of ice cream
* small carton of yogurt
* ½ cup raw vegetables and dip (not fat free)
* 2 cups of popcorn and a small handful of peanuts
* 1 can regular soft drink and a small bag of nuts
* 1 up of eggnog or chocolate milk