



HEALTHY LIVING

Happy Back to School

Learn Five Tips for Better Meal Planning

It's that time of year again when everything feels new. Maybe it's because a new school year often means a new schedule and a new routine for everyone. With so many things going on, such as juggling various work meetings and picking up and dropping off the kids from extracurricular activities, the task of (healthy) meal planning often takes a back seat. But it doesn't have to be that way as long as you plan ahead. Paula Bernstein, author of the article "Make-Ahead Meal Plan for Busy Families" in *Parents Magazine*, shares these helpful tips:

1. Plan. Plan. Plan. Invest 15 minutes on the weekends to plan out the entire week's meals. Involve the kids in the planning. Not only will they come up with new ideas, they'll also enjoy the meal more when their suggested meals are cooked and ready on the dinner table.
2. Variety is key. It's not a bad idea to create several weekly menus (if you have time) and rotate them so you won't be eating the same food every week.
3. Set up a grocery shopping schedule to ensure

the fridge is stocked. When there is food in the house, it makes menu planning a lot easier.

4. Food preparation eats up a lot of time. It's best to prepare as much as you can in advance, such as on the weekend, the night before, or early in the morning before everyone gets up. Frozen fruits and vegetables are also handy.
5. In the essence of saving time, preheat the oven as soon as you get home for meals that require it. Slow cookers are also a great appliance that can be used the night before or during the day when everyone is out and about.

HEALTHY HEART

Love Your Heart

Healthy Habits for All Ages

According to the Canadian Heart and Stroke Foundation, roughly 1.6 million Canadians are living with heart disease or the effects of a stroke. What's more alarming is that cardiovascular diseases continue to be the number one cause of death in Canada, resulting in over 33,600 deaths each year.

It's true that there are uncontrollable factors, including your family history and age that put you at risk. At the same time, there are factors that can

be controlled and it's never too early to adopt better heart habits. Whether you are age 7 or 77, you can reduce your risk of developing heart disease or worsening your condition by making the following lifestyle changes.

- Don't smoke or quit if are already a smoker. Smokers have increased blood pressure which can lead to blocked arteries.
- Know your numbers. Lower readings of blood pressure and reducing your LDL cholesterol can also lessen your risk of heart disease.
- Manage your diabetes. When blood sugar levels are controlled, your heart and blood vessels are also kept healthy.
- Don't stress or at least learn to cope. Your physical and mental health take a toll when you can't deal with stress. Your heart health is definitely at risk.
- Start moving. Physical exercise gets the heart pumping and keeps it strong.
- Maintain a healthy body weight. Obesity is a chronic disease that increases your risk of developing a host of ailments. Heart disease is just one of them.
- Eat a balanced diet. Make sure you eat enough fruits and vegetables and avoid eating foods with trans- fat, and saturated fats. Also watch your daily sodium and sugar intake.

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Source: Canadian Heart and Stroke Foundation

TRG
GROUP BENEFITS

HEALTHY MIND

Walk Don't Run

How Daily Walks Can Improve Brain Function

Do you ever have memory lapses where you can't recall something specific that was just discussed? How about forgetting a person's name right after you were just introduced? We are all prone to some form of cognitive impairment, especially as we age. A simple way to prevent further degradation is by going for a walk three times a week. There is a connect according to Dr. Teresa Liu-Ambrose, a University of British Columbia researcher and Professor of Physiotherapy.

Dr. Liu-Ambrose cites there is more evidence to point to how physical exercise can prevent or impede the progress of dementia. In her study, 71 participants between the ages of 56 and 96 with confirmed mild cognitive impairment caused by mini-strokes were divided into two groups. Group one engaged in one hour of aerobic exercise three times a week at a pace where their heart rate rose to a moderate level. Group two (the control group) went about their usual routine and took part in a monthly education sessions on nutrition. The participants completed memory and other cognitive tests at the start and end of the six month study. Both the test scores and brain scans afterward showed improvements in group one – the walkers.

Although the research isn't 100% robust, Dr. Liu-Ambrose said physical exercise "could potentially buy some additional time with more quality of life than less". This is especially true for those who are affected by cognitive impairment.

If you haven't already gone for your daily walk yet, start lacing up your shoes now. Your brain and body will thank you for it.