

INGREDIENTS FOR A DYNAMITE DEMONSTRATION

Supplies

- Blank Paper (one per participant)
- Pen or pencil (one per participant)
- Sample Grocery Store Ads

Handouts

- What's On the Shelf?
- Healthy Meal Planner Sample
- Healthy Meal Entrée List (Side A) / Healthy Meal Planner Worksheet (Side B)
- Smart Shopper Price Comparison

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the session participants will be able to:

1. State 1-2 benefits of meal planning.
2. Plan a weeks' worth of meals.
3. Locate and know how to use the unit price at the grocery store. (purchasing)

INTRODUCTION

- **[Ask the audience:]** *What happens when your family asks. "What's for dinner tonight?"* (Examples: do you panic?/go to the drive through?/go shopping?) or,

Some people have a plan. Do you?

- *Now more than ever we need to pay close attention to the foods we buy. Our challenge is to plan and budget to buy healthy foods for our family all month. By healthy we mean foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains (WG), low or non fat dairy, proteins from plants, and lean meats. And, the least processed or packaged as possible.*
- **[Ask the audience:]** *Can anyone name a few proteins that come from plants?* (Examples: beans, tofu, and peanut butter are common examples.)

- To help you meet this challenge, today's workshop is about the 3 P's of Eating Healthy...on a Budget. They are: **Planning**, **Purchasing**, and **Preparing**.
- You will learn:
 - How to make a meal plan that is healthy and stretches your food dollars, and
 - How to get the most value for your money at the grocery store.

PART 1 -- PLAN

- Why is planning, for the meals you will prepare, and the foods you need to buy, so important?
- Planning is the key to saving **time** and **money**.

[Ask the audience:] Is there anyone here who doesn't want to save time and money?

- Planning will also help you and your family to eat healthier.
- Even though we know there are many good reasons for people to plan the meals they are going to feed their families, a lot of people do not do it.

[Ask the audience:] Why don't most people plan?

(Examples: don't have time/too much trouble/don't know how)

- Today we're going to prove to you that **Planning is Power!** It's worth taking some time up front to plan so you can save precious time and money later. Here are three steps to help you get started on your plan.

PLANNING STEP 1 — Know What's On Your Shelf

- Before you go shopping it's important to think about how much money you can spend, what foods you have on hand, what foods you can purchase with your CalFresh EBT card or coupons, and what is healthy.
- Know which basic items you have on your kitchen shelves or in the refrigerator so you can put a meal on the table quickly and easily. Knowing what you already have on hand will help you to buy only the food you need.

[Ask the audience:] How many of you could make a meal from what you've got on hand?

- We're going to take a few minutes for you to make your own What's on Your Shelf List. We'll start by making a list of what you usually have at home.

[Handout: Blank Paper for What's on Your Shelf List]



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- *Using this blank sheet of paper, write down 10 things that you typically keep on hand, based on your family's needs and likes.*
- *As you make your list, think about what you have on your shelves or in your refrigerator that you could use to make a healthy meal.*
- *And please be honest. Create this list based on what you really have at home!*

[Ask the audience to take about 5 minutes to complete their *What's on Your Shelf* List]

Please keep your list handy. We will be using it shortly in our meal planning exercise.

[Handout: *What's On the Shelf?*]

- *Take a look at the list we prepared that gives examples of basic, healthy items to keep on your shelves at home. From these items, you can create some great meals!*

PLANNING STEP 2—Know What You Want to Prepare

- *After you know what you have on hand, the next step is to know what you want to prepare. We're going to show you how to plan meals that will save you time, stretch your dollars, and help you feed your family healthy food.*

[Handout: *Healthy Meal Planner Sample*]

- *Here's an example of a *Healthy Meal Planner* for five days. Right now, we're going to focus on the highlighted areas of the handout: *Dinner on Day 3* and *Lunch and Dinner on Day 4*.*
- *Walk through examples:*
 - *Dinner Day 3 —One Pot Vegetable Stew, which uses beans. We cooked extra beans to save time and energy. We'll use the beans for lunch and dinner the following day.*
 - *Lunch Day 4 —Bean and vegetable burrito on a whole grain tortilla, made with the beans from last night's dinner.*
 - *Dinner Day 4 — Turkey and bean chili with corn bread and a green salad. We also used the beans from last night's dinner for tonight's dinner!*
- *Notice how we used beans as our protein example...by incorporating proteins that are plant based we are adding more fiber and less saturated fat to our meal.*
- *And we saved time by cooking enough beans for three meals all at once. Once the beans are cooked, it only takes a few minutes the next day to make the bean and vegetable burrito for lunch. We also save time, and money, because having a plan*



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means we have all the ingredients or food on hand and we don't have to run out to the store at the last minute.

- Now it's your turn! We want you to get used to planning how to get the most out of your time, your food and your dollars. Remember, **Planning is Power!**
- Today we are going to practice planning three meals (like the three highlighted boxes on the Healthy Meal Planner Worksheet): two dinners and a lunch.
- When you use this tool at home, we recommend that you check the store ads first, so you will be able to take advantage of sales as you plan your meals.

(Take a poll – do you get the store ads? Show a sample of grocery store ads.)

- Then, before you go shopping, fill out your Healthy Meal Planner for all five days, like we did in our example.
- To design your Meal Plan, keep the MyPlate message in mind, start with your protein source or main dish (such as meat, chicken, fish, tofu or beans) that your family will enjoy and that you can make on Day 1 in large quantity.
- Then build a meal by adding your favorite whole grains (such as noodle or rice bowls or bread), as well as vegetables, fruit and dairy items.
- Remember, if you participate in CalFresh...CalFresh provides families with the ability to purchase fresh produce.
- Then think about how you can s-t-r-e-t-c-h your food to get the most out of it! For example, if you're using beans like we did in the example, you can cook them the first night and then use them the following day.
- You can also use leftovers to create a one-pot meal (such as stews, soups, or casseroles) for Day 2.
- When making your Meal Plan, use what you can from your own What's On Your Shelf List. Or, you may use the List we prepared for you with suggestions for healthy foods to keep on hand.

[Hold up handout: *What's on the Shelf?*]

[Ask the audience to flip over the *Healthy Entrée List (side A) Healthy Meal Planner Worksheet (side B).*]

- There will be some ingredients in your Meal Plan that you don't already have on hand. Don't worry—in just a few minutes we're going to the grocery store!



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- *Now pair up with someone in the audience and take about 10 minutes to design a Meal Plan for each of you.*
- *But before you start designing your meal plan lets create a Master Entrée list. This is a list of entrees or main dishes that you enjoy preparing and that your family enjoys eating!*
- *Then, use your master entrée list to design a meal plan for you and your family. Using the Healthy Meal Planner Worksheet (on the back of the master entrée list), create a Dinner on day 1 and Lunch and Dinner on day 2. Remember; keep the MyPlate message in mind. You may also want to look at our Healthy Meal Planner for ideas. We challenge you to make one of the days meatless!*

[After 10 minutes, ask one or two people to briefly share what they came up with, and thank them]

- *As you get used to planning your meals, it will become easier and faster, and you'll have lots of ideas to fill up your Healthy Meal Planner.*

PLANNING STEP 3—Know What You Are Missing

- *The next step in planning is to find out what you are missing so you can buy it at the store. Making a shopping list for what you want to buy is an important part of staying healthy and on budget.*
- **[Ask the audience:]** *What happens for you when you go to the store and you don't have a list?*
(Examples: I spend more than I wanted to/buy things I don't need/forget things I do need)

[Tell audience to use the backside of their scratch paper to make their Smart Shopping List.]

- *Now let's make a Smart Shopping List. Start with a blank piece of paper. You will also be using the Healthy Meal Planner Worksheet you just filled out, as well as your What's on Your Shelf List.*

[Hold up the handouts for the audience]

- *Looking at your Healthy Meal Planner Worksheet, figure out which ingredients you already have on hand and what you need to buy to follow your plan. Whatever you don't have on hand goes on your Smart Shopping List.*
- *Be sure to write down on your shopping list how much of each item you need to buy. This Smart Shopping List will be your guide once you get to the store.*
- *So now take about 5 minutes to create your own Smart Shopping List.*



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- *Now that you have your list, we're almost ready to go shopping. But before you go, check to see if you have any coupons for items on your list. Make sure you don't bring any coupons for things you don't really use or need. You'll end up spending more, instead of saving money that way!*
- *Before you leave the house be sure to bring:*
 - 1) *your list*
 - 2) *any coupons you need*
 - 3) *your CalFresh EBT card to purchase fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods*
 - 4) *your store's club card for savings at the supermarket*
- *And now, let's go shopping!*

PART 2: PURCHASE

- *One of the best ways to be a Smart Shopper is — Stick To Your List! No matter how much you want to buy something, do not buy it unless it's on your list! Your shopping list is the result of careful planning, and will go a long way to keep you healthy and on budget.*
- *And remember, children are great at getting us to buy things we don't need. Shopping with your children means you have to pay even closer attention to your list! And if you're hungry, be sure to have a healthy snack before you go. Hungry shoppers find it harder to stick to their list!*
- *There is one exception to Sticking to Your List. Take advantage of sales on healthy items you like to have on hand that won't go bad, like canned tuna or whole grain pasta.*
- *Once you're at the store, you'll be looking for the best values. Good low cost items available all year around include:*
 - *Proteins - beans (black, cannellini, garbanzo, kidney, pinto)*
 - *vegetables - (carrots, greens, potatoes)*
 - *Fruit – apples, bananas*
 - *Grains – brown rice, oats*
 - *Dairy – fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk*
- *Purchase some items in bulk or as family packs which usually cost less*
- *Checking the unit price is a great way to get better buys.*
- *The unit price is the price of the food per pound or per ounce. Stickers showing the unit price are found on the shelves below items in most supermarkets.*
- *[Ask for a show of hands:] How many of you check the unit price stickers on the supermarket shelves before you buy?*



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- *It's a good idea to get in the habit of checking unit prices. They help you compare two different size packages or two different brands to find the best buy.*
- *Since many people are not familiar with what unit price stickers look like, take a look at the photo in the middle of this handout called Smart Shopper Comparison. This is what you will find on the shelf.*

[Handout: Smart Shopper Comparison]

- *At the top of the page you can see two stickers comparing different brands of tomato sauce.*

[Ask the Audience:] *What is the unit price for the name brand? (Answer—11¢ per ounce)*

[Ask the Audience:] *What is the unit price for the store brand? (Answer—6¢ per ounce)
In this case, the name brand costs almost twice as much as the store brand! Here's a rule of thumb: always look for the lowest unit price. So which brand of tomato sauce would you buy?*

- *Remember when I said I was going to prove to you that Planning is Power? Well, here's my chance. Take a look at the comparison on the bottom half of this handout.*
- *These are real numbers that we found at a local supermarket. In this example, Hilda High Price ended up paying a lot more for the same items as Sonia Smart Shopper. Hilda rushed in and grabbed the items she needed without looking at unit prices, sales, store brands, or any other "good deals."*
- *Sonia Smart Shopper did her homework. Based on her Meal Plan, Sonia knew she needed chicken. Take look at the line that says "Fresh Chicken." Here you can see that Hilda High Price bought a chicken already cut in pieces, while Sonia Smart Shopper bought a whole chicken. By buying a whole chicken, Sonia saved \$2.10!*
- *Take a moment to review the Smart Shopper Handout with your neighbor.*
- *If you take a look at your chart, you'll see other areas where Sonia saved money, such as using a coupon for cereal, her store card for frozen peas, and shopping for sale items like canned beans.*
- *In this real life example, Hilda spent almost \$24.00 and Sonia spent about \$17.00. So, for the same six items, Sonia saved more than \$7.00! Can you see how Planning is Power, and makes you a Smart Shopper?*
- *Now it's time to go home and follow your Healthy Meal Plan.*



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PART 3: PREPARE

- *If you did a good job with Planning and Purchasing, the third “P”—Prepare—is the easy part. You already have a plan. You’ve shopped and you have everything you need to follow your plan. Now all you have to do is do it!*

[Ask the audience:] *Are there food preparation tips that save you time and money that you practice that you would like to share with the group?*

[Acknowledge the suggestions and add the additional ideas...]

- *Store foods properly and right away to preserve freshness. Food that gets thrown out is money lost!*
- *Try to prepare some meal items in advance, pre-cook on days when you have time.*
- *Double or triple up on recipes and freeze meal-sized containers of soups and casseroles or divide into individual portions.*
- *Try a few meatless meals by using beans or peas or try no cook meals like salads.*
- *Remember to use healthy cooking methods, such as broiling, baking, grilling and steaming—instead of frying your food.*
- *Be sure to store your leftovers right after the meal, so you can use them as you planned for the next day.*
- *And have your children help you prepare meals. Make meal time “family time.”*

CONCLUSION

- *To review, here are the key steps for the 3 Ps of Eating Healthy...On a Budget.*
 1. *Know what you have on hand.*
 2. *Make a Healthy Meal Plan for the week.*
 3. *Make a Shopping List of items you need to buy.*
 4. *Be a “Smart Shopper” at the store.*
 5. *Stick to your Plan when you get home!*
- *Are you convinced yet that Planning is Power? We’ve seen how Healthy Meal Planning saves time and money. We’ve also given you tips on Smart Shopping so you can get the most value at the store. And finally, we’ve given you ideas for preparing healthy meals on a budget.*
- *So, now, the next time your family asks you, “What’s for dinner?” you’ll know exactly what to say!*

Thank you!



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