



## Meal Planning 101

The start of a new year always comes with new goals, whether it's working out more, getting organized, spending less, or eating healthier. These last two goals can be accomplished together by eating more meals at home. You can incorporate more vegetables, fruit, and other healthy ingredients into your meals when you cook at home. Plus, you know that there is no added sugar or unhealthy fats hidden in your meal since you're the one who made it! However, for many busy families, it is difficult to find the time and energy to cook at home. Meal planning can be a big help, but it can be overwhelming to get started. Here are some tips to help you ease into meal planning to achieve your 2023 goals.

### Start small

You don't have to overhaul your family's entire diet at one time. Start by setting a small goal. If the number of times you eat out each week concerns you, try to cook one additional meal at home per week. If you manage to get dinner on the table most nights, but it is chaotic and stressful, try to plan the week's meals and prep some ahead of time so that it can be a more enjoyable experience when dinnertime rolls around. If you're concerned that your crew isn't eating enough vegetables, try adding one veggie per meal (even if that means you have to hide it in the food). Once you reach that goal, you can set a bigger goal but you don't want to set yourself up for failure by trying to fix everything all at once.

### Start with crowd-pleasing meals

Many enthusiastic goal-setters try to jump into healthy eating by finding recipes or plans from nutrition experts and copying them exactly. The missed first step here, though, is evaluating these plans to see if your family even likes those meals. Take some time at the beginning of your meal planning journey to write down a list of meals that your family always likes, and incorporate these meals into your weekly plans. Make sure to save your list for future plans!

### Decide your meal-planning style

Not everyone's meal-planning and prepping routine looks the same. Some people like to have lunches and dinners fully prepared before the week begins. Others prepare some of the ingredients (like chopping vegetables or browning meats) and finish the meals right before dinner. Some don't want a rigid plan, they just want to have three or four meals prepped and they decide on that day which they'll eat. Some even like to take one day a month and make a whole load of freezer-ready meals that they can heat up for many different dinners. Take a look at your schedule and your preferences and decide what you'll do. Here's the best thing: if you try one way and don't like it, you can totally change the way you do it! Nothing is set in stone so keep experimenting to find what works for you.

Now you're ready to begin!

## News & Events

### • Children in Nature: Build Your Own Bird Feeder

- Saturday, January 14, 2023  
10 a.m. - noon  
Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center  
1206 W. FM 1382  
Cedar Hill, TX 75104  
In this children's activity we will create pinecone bird feeders. Each participant will take home one bird feeder at the end of the event. Free event! For more information visit: <https://dogwood.audubon.org/>

### • Creature Teacher: Preschool Edition

- Wednesday, January 11  
10:45 - 11:15 a.m.  
Southlake Library  
1400 Main Street # 130  
Southlake, TX 76092  
Join us as we get up close with some of our favorite furry and scaly friends. Free event!  
For more info visit: [www.facebook.com/events/478667057332941](http://www.facebook.com/events/478667057332941)

### • Yoga for Toddlers & their Grown Ups with ATX Yoga Girl in Pease Park

- Wed, January 11, 10:00 - 10:45 a.m.  
1100 Kingsbury Street Austin, TX 78703  
Come stretch, breathe, move, dance, relax, create, and have FUN! For more info visit: [www.eventbrite.com/e/yoga-for-toddlers-their-grown-ups-with-atx-yoga-girl-in-pease-park-tickets-490972159947?aff=ebdssbdests-earch](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/yoga-for-toddlers-their-grown-ups-with-atx-yoga-girl-in-pease-park-tickets-490972159947?aff=ebdssbdests-earch)

### • VIVA Employee Monthly Townhall

All VIVA employees, join us for our first monthly townhall! You will receive an email with further information. Thursday, January 26th at 11:30AM

## Resources

### • **VIVA Pediatrics Resources**

In an effort to help our families, we constantly strive to provide them with relevant and helpful resources and information. Visit our resources page online at: [www.vivaped.com/resources](http://www.vivaped.com/resources)

For current events visit us on Facebook. [www.facebook.com/VIVAPeds](http://www.facebook.com/VIVAPeds)

### • **Care Starter App**

The Connections App is a complete resource guide for families of kids, teens and adults with special needs. Their goal is to help you find providers, organizations and other resources in your community to help you along your path of care. Download the CareStarter App now! [www.carestarter.co/connectionsapp](http://www.carestarter.co/connectionsapp)



### • **The Parker Lee Project**

The Parker Lee Project is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping families of children with medical needs obtain the necessary supplies & equipment, education, and support they need. While most supplies are covered by insurance, some are not, or not enough supplies are provided. If you have a need for medical supplies or have supplies to donate, please visit their website at [www.theparkerleeproject.org](http://www.theparkerleeproject.org)

### • **Texas Star Kids**

The Texas' Star Kids mandate threatens the lives of our weakest and most vulnerable little citizens. Join us in standing up for those who have no voice. Click this link to sign up: [www.facebook.com/ProtectTXFragileKids](https://www.facebook.com/ProtectTXFragileKids)  
For more info visit: [www.protecttxfragilekids.org](http://www.protecttxfragilekids.org)

### • **Thrive Magazine**

Need Resources for your child with special needs? Thrive Magazine shares resources and stories of other families in the DFW area who are living and thriving with special needs. [www.dfwchild.com/thrive/directory](http://www.dfwchild.com/thrive/directory)

### • **Recognize a VIVA Star**

Viva Pediatrics has an Employee Rewards and Recognition Program to thank and recognize employees that go "above and beyond". Both employees and patient families are welcome to recognize a VIVA employee! Call one of our offices and let us know if a VIVA employee has gone above and beyond!



## Get Healthy with Giggles

### Snacks for School-Age Kids

Snacks are an important part of your child's day. Besides getting three meals, school-age kids usually eat one or two snacks a day.

Most schools offer a mid-morning snack. As kids get older, they may not need a morning snack unless they have a very late lunch. Talk with your kids to find out what works best for them.

Most kids want an after-school snack. A healthy after-school snack can help kids stay focused on homework and give them the energy they need for active play, sports, or other after-school activities. Pack healthy snacks for kids who aren't coming home right away.

If you have an early dinner time, skip the snack and offer the salad or vegetable you make for dinner to take the edge off their hunger.

What Snacks Are Good for School-Age Kids?

Here are some snacks that school-age kids might enjoy:

- home-made trail mix with whole-grain breakfast cereal and nuts and raisins
- string cheese with grapes or other fruit
- fruit smoothies made with yogurt, milk, or a dairy-free milk-alternative
- ice pops made with 100% fruit juice or yogurt in ice pop molds or ice cube trays. Add chopped fruit before putting in the freezer.
- whole-grain pretzels with peanut butter
- fruit slices dipped in low-fat flavored yogurt or veggies dipped in hummus
- Make Healthy Snacking a Habit
- Buy and serve healthy foods. Avoid snacks that are high in sugar, salt, and fat.

\* <https://kidshealth.org>

## Food for Thought



Slow Cooker Pot Roast

### Ingredients

- 3 lb chuck roast salt
- 1 oz dried onion soup mix
- 3 golden potatoes - diced
- 3 large carrots - peeled and diced
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 tsp. of ground cumin
- 1/4 tsp. dried rosemary
- 1 tsp. of garlic powder
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Directions

- Place the chuck roast in a 7-quart (6 ½ liters) slow cooker and season with cumin, garlic powder and salt and pepper.
- Sprinkle the onion soup pack and top with vegetables and water.
- Cook on low for 8 hours, or high for 4-5 hours.

Enjoy!

How do mountains stay warm?



With a snowcap

Just for Giggles!

