

# HEALTHY CHOICES

## FOR HEALTHY FAMILIES

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University of Kentucky  
College of Agriculture,  
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## Cooking for your busy lifestyle

**D**o you want to cook more meals at home but feel stressed for time on busy weeknights? Freezer meals could be the solution for you. Freezer meals are entrees you prepare ahead of time and store in the freezer.

### Benefit of freezer meals

- **Save time.** Freezer meals allow you to make a large batch, or several batches of the same recipe at one time. Not only does this allow for a quick meal later, but it also cuts down on shopping time, cooking time, and even having to wash pots, pans, or cooking tools used to make the same recipe again.
- **Save money.** Buy items when you can get the best deals on them, cook and freeze them, then enjoy the savings over time. Take advantage of discounted meats or the low prices of seasonal produce. Compare per unit pricing and consider buying bulk or larger packages when it



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## SMART TIPS

### Freezing food does not kill bacteria

**B**acteria can survive freezing temperatures. Freezing is not a method for making foods safe to eat. When food thaws, bacteria can still be present and might begin to multiply. Cooking food to the proper internal temperature is the best way to kill harmful bacteria. Use a thermometer to measure the temperature of cooked foods.

Source: Fight BAC! Partnership for Food Safety Education

## BASIC BUDGET BITES

### Sugar-sweetened savings

**A**re you a fan of drinking sugar-sweetened beverages like soda? Have you ever considered the cost of this habit? An average 12-pack of a name-brand soda costs around \$5. If you drink two sodas per day for a year, this would cost approximately \$305 per person/per year! Now imagine what it's costing you if you drink more than two cans a day or if you have a whole family drinking soda. Cutting back or even eliminating soda from your diet, not only is beneficial to your health, but will help you stretch your food dollar.

Source: Amy Singleton, Regional Extension Agent  
for Kentucky Nutrition Education Program



## FOOD FACTS

### Fiber

**F**iber is a type of carbohydrate from the structural part of plants that cannot be digested by the body. It does not provide energy to the body but it does play an important role in a healthy diet. There are many benefits of fiber:

- Helps with blood glucose control by slowing the pace at which your body breaks down and releases blood glucose into the bloodstream following a meal.
- Reduces cholesterol levels and reduces heart disease risk.
- Aids in weight management by giving the feeling of fullness by slowing down the pace food travels through the digestive system.
- Helps regulate bowel movements.
- Might reduce the risk for certain cancers.

Foods high in fiber include fruits, vegetables, nuts, beans, peas, and whole grains. Your fiber needs vary based on your specific energy needs. Most adults should strive for a minimum of 25 grams of fiber every day. It's important to increase your fiber intake gradually over time and drink plenty of water to enjoy all the benefits of fiber.

Source: Kentucky Nutrition Education Program:  
Healthy Choices for Every Body

## COOKING WITH KIDS

### Green Egg Bake

- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided
- 1 chopped onion
- 4 cups (packed) chopped spinach leaves
- 8 large eggs
- ½ cup shredded or crumbled cheese, such as cheddar, Swiss, feta, or Parmesan
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper

1. Turn the oven on and set the heat to 350 degrees F. Using your clean hand or a paper towel, grease the baking pan with 1 teaspoon of oil.
2. Put the skillet on the stove, turn the heat to medium, and carefully add the remaining 2 teaspoons of oil.
3. When the oil is hot, add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until golden and softened, about 7 minutes. Add the spinach, and cook until just wilted, about 2 minutes. Set aside until cool, about 10 minutes.
4. Put the eggs, salt, and pepper into a bowl and, using a fork or whisk, mix well.
5. Add the cooled spinach mixture and cheese, and mix well.
6. Pour the mixture into the pan and carefully move it to the oven.
7. Bake until the top is golden and the eggs are set, 25 to 30 minutes. (To see if the eggs are set, use pot holders to jiggle the pan back and forth; you should not see the eggs moving around as if they're still liquid in the center.)
8. Serve warm or at room temperature, or cover and refrigerate up to two days.

**Servings:** 8

Source: Chop Chop Magazine



## RECIPE

### Broccoli and Beef Stir-fry

- 1 tablespoon plus ½ cup stir-fry sauce
- 1 clove minced garlic
- 1 pound lean beefsteak, sliced diagonally across the grain into thin strips
- 4 tablespoons canola oil, divided
- 1 medium red onion, cut into ½-inch dice
- 1 sweet red pepper, cut into ½-inch dice
- 1 medium yellow squash, cut into ¼-inch slices
- 2 cups fresh broccoli florets
- 1 cup cauliflower florets
- ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

1. Combine 1 tablespoon of stir-fry sauce and minced garlic in a bowl. Add the beef strips. Let stand 15 minutes.
2. Heat 1 tablespoon of canola oil in a large skillet.
3. Add beef and stir-fry for one minute. Remove beef from skillet.
4. Heat the remaining 3 tablespoons of canola oil in the skillet or wok. Add vegetables. Stir-fry for four minutes or until vegetables are crisp-tender.
5. Return beef to skillet.

6. Add the remaining ½ cup stir-fry sauce and red pepper flakes. Cook and stir 1 to 2 minutes longer, until heated through.

**Yield:** 8, 1-cup servings

**Nutrition Analysis:** 180 calories; 10 g fat; 1.5 g saturated fat; 0 g trans fat; 25 mg cholesterol; 630 mg sodium; 9 g carbohydrate; 2 g fiber; 3 g sugar; 15 g protein. 90% recommended allowance for vitamin C.

Source: Plate It Up! Kentucky Proud



## PARENT'S POW-WOW

# Health benefits of physical activity start early

**T**he U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has released new physical activity guidelines for America; it published the last update 10 years ago. For the first time, recommendations are made for young children aged 3 to 5 years old. These guidelines state, “preschool-aged children should be physically active throughout the day to enhance growth and development.” A reasonable goal would be active play of 3 hours each day. Strong evidence shows that higher amounts of physical activity are associated with improved bone health, and reduced body weight and body fat in 3 to 5 year olds.

The recommendation for older children aged 6 to 17 years of age is to participate in “60 or more minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity as well as regular engagement in vigorous physical activity, muscle-strengthening exercise, and bone-strengthening activities.”

Source: 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines  
Advisory Committee Scientific Report



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# Cooking for your busy lifestyle

provides cost savings. For example, if a 5-pound package of ground beef is on sale for \$3 a pound versus \$5 for a single-pound package at regular price, buy the larger package to save money over time. Use some for tacos this week and the rest to prepare and freeze recipes like meat sauce for spaghetti or make chili.

- **Be in control.** By making your own freezer meals instead of purchasing frozen entrees at the store, you are in control. You decide the recipe and how much salt or fat to use

in preparing the food. This can lead to healthier frozen meals and, oftentimes, meals that taste better.

### Tips for getting started

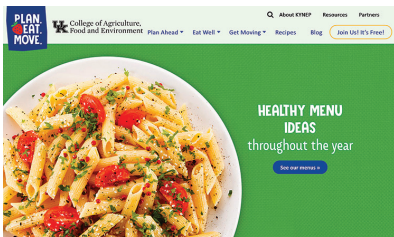
- **Don't get overwhelmed.** Start slowly by doubling a dinner recipe — serve one immediately and freeze the other.
- **Freeze meal portions for your family.** Line pans and dishes so food can be removed from the dish once it has frozen. Once you remove the food from the dish, wrap it well and place

it back in the freezer. This will free up dishes and provide more space.

- **Date and label items.** A label including the date will keep you from forgetting what something is. For quality purposes, you should eat frozen foods within one year of the time they are frozen.
- **Allow time to thaw before reheating.** Place freezer meals in the refrigerator 24 hours before reheating.

Source: Amy Singleton, Regional Extension Agent  
for Kentucky Nutrition Education Program

## LOCAL EVENTS



## PlanEatMove.com

Connect with or contact your county to learn about free classes in your community! Visit [PlanEatMove.com/free-classes](https://PlanEatMove.com/free-classes) to learn more.

If you are interested in nutrition classes, contact your Extension office.

VISIT US ONLINE AT  
[EXTENSION.CA.UKY.EDU/COUNTY](https://EXTENSION.CA.UKY.EDU/COUNTY)