

# Family Food Matters

*Nutrition Newsletter for Early Childhood*

December  
2014

## Planning Ahead Helps Busy Parents

### Why Plan a Meal?

- 🍏 Saves time - When you plan meals no time is wasted deciding what to cook for dinner each night. This allows you to spend more time enjoying the meal with your family.
- 🍏 Saves money- Planning helps create a clear shopping list, which saves money at the grocery store by avoiding last minute purchases.
- 🍏 Leads to Healthy Choices- By planning meals and snacks ahead you will have healthy choices ready to cook and eat. This can help your family avoid unhealthy processed foods that are high in fats, sugars, and sodium.

### Tips for Successful Meal Planning

- **Save some for later-** If you are making one of your family's favorite meals double the recipe and freeze some for later. Freezer meals give you quick healthy options for busy times.
- **Plan to Meal Plan-** Write out a meal plan every few days or every week. Plan as many meals as you can. Include breakfast, lunch, dinner, and even snacks.
- **Deals for the week-** Check weekly mailers for coupons and sales at your local grocery store that you can plan your meals around.
- **Involve the whole family-** Plan the week's meals together in order to include a variety of meals that everyone enjoys. This is a great opportunity for your whole family to learn about healthy food choice together.
- **Focus on Healthy Choices-** Try to plan healthy meals by using MyPlate recommendations. Use ingredients from the different food groups including fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and dairy.

## Take a Look At Your Grocery List

### Dairy

Choose foods high in calcium to keep growing bones strong.

TRY:

2% Milk

Low-fat yogurt

Low-fat cheese

### Grains

Are at least half of my grains whole?

TRY:

Whole-Wheat Bread

Brown Rice

Oatmeal

### Protein

Are these lean sources of protein?

TRY:

Skinless Chicken Breasts

Salmon

Black Beans

### Vegetables

Are there different color veggies on this list?

TRY:

Carrots

Bell Peppers

Broccoli

Cucumbers

### Fruits

Are these good on-the-go snacks?

TRY:

Apples

Bananas

Oranges

*Keep these ideas in mind when creating your meal plan and grocery to help choose healthy foods for your family.*

## Tips for Freezing

- 🍏 Add the flavor later- Some spices can loose or change their flavor when frozen. Leave spices out during preparation and add them in when you defrost and heat the meal to eat.
- 🍏 Keep defrosting easy- Pack frozen meals in serving size or meal size portions so you only thaw what you will be eating.
- 🍏 Know what you have - Label foods when you freeze them identifying the type of food it is and the date of preparation. This will help you keep track of what foods you have available and how long they have been frozen for.



## Black Bean Chili (Serves 6, total time 35 minutes)

### Ingredients:

2 cups chopped onion  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
½ cup water  
1 tablespoon ground cumin  
1 tablespoon ground coriander  
1 cup prepared tomato salsa  
2 red or green bell peppers, chopped  
2 15-ounce cans of black beans, drained and rinsed  
1 28-ounce can whole tomato's with juice  
2 cups fresh or frozen corn kernels  
Salt, to taste  
Tabasco or other hot sauce to taste

### Directions

1. In a covered soup pot, cook the onions and garlic in the water on high heat, stirring frequently for about 5 minutes
2. Add the cumin and coriander and stir on high heat for a minute. Stir the salsa and bell peppers, lower the heat, cover and simmer for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally
3. Add the black beans and tomatoes; simmer for 10 minutes.
4. Add the corn and continue to cook for 10 minutes.
5. Add salt and Tabasco to taste. Stir in cilantro if desired