

WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for January 23, 2023
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, & Healthy Relationships we'll talk about meal planning and preparation, and as always look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

Sometimes I read back over these segments from past years, and I have to laugh a little. In fact, sometimes I read them to my family, and they laugh a lot. I recently read them an excerpt from a segment I recorded three years ago about planning for my future self. One of my goals was to be better at meal planning. I had such high hopes.

One step forward, two steps back. So it goes with my best intentions to be healthier or more efficient. But we keep trying.

One thing I am learning with meal planning and preparation is that not everything works for everyone. After a variety of family life changes, what used to work may not work well any longer. The only way to know what works for you is to try different approaches. If you are in a rut of fixing the same things, or barely making time to think about what you are eating, here are a few ideas that may meet you where you are.

Plan to plan: Maybe it is obvious, but it takes time to plan. Be intentional and bring in some fun. Depending on the ages in your household, try to give everyone a voice in sharing what they like. As a family, create some rules that work for you. You could have color themes- like at least two colors of the rainbow on a plate. Or you could try implementing an international night that moves beyond Taco Tuesday. Recently my colleague Jenny Lobb taught a series on heart healthy "Soups from Around the World", including an African Peanut and Greens Stew and Mexican Posole that you can find on livehealthyosu.com

Look for inspiration: Gone are the days of flipping through cookbooks for recipe ideas. Or are they? Even in this age of social media, I find retro inspiration in looking through old recipes. Do you have a stash of magazine clippings or cards from friends of "recipes to try someday"? Could it be realistic to plan to try one new recipe a month? Another interesting approach could be interviewing friends and family. What are 2 or 3 of their go-to recipes they enjoy? If you are in

the habit of making meals for one, invite someone over for dinner. Likewise, ask if you can bring dinner to someone in your life you know often eats alone.

Pick one meal to plan: I've long been enamored with the master calendar to plan every meal each day for an entire week. However, I've found this to be too formal and constraining. Instead, I focus on the expectation to make one meal a day, usually dinner. My habit is to fix enough dinner so there are leftovers for lunch. I figure that a conservative estimate is a savings of \$5 each week. Given that the American Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates the average American spends \$18 on lunches out each week, I'm probably saving closer to \$500 a year.

Don't Forget Breakfast: OK, I may already be breaking that last rule of focusing on one meal. But there are some pretty easy recipes you can make up on the weekend to get you excited about breakfast the rest of the week. CelebrateYourPlate.org has 33 affordable breakfast suggestions that incorporate fruits and vegetables. Some are sweet like moist Morning Glory Muffins, and some are savory like the tasty Vegetable Frittata.

Whether familiar or new, I hope this week you will enjoy a well-planned meal with the people you love.

And now let's look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension. Direct food marketing in Ohio is hot. The latest USDA survey identified over 7,000 Ohio farms with direct food sales—third highest in the nation. OSU Extension is hosting a three-part webinar series on “Starting a Food Business,” to help producers wanting to sell home-based and farm-raised foods directly to consumers and retailers. I hope you'll join me for this free webinar series which includes *Start-Up Basics* on January 24, *Selling Home-Based Foods* on February 29 and *Selling Meat and Poultry* on March 28. Find details and the registration link at go.osu.edu/foodbusiness .

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help educate and improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at coshocton.osu.edu. Make it a healthy day!