

WHAT'S COOKING? HOW TO ORGANIZE YOUR MEALS FROM DAWN TO DUSK

Presentation Handout

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1. Poor food consumption effects on:

- a. Health:
 - i. Overweight or obesity as resorting to take out
 - ii. Stress & anxiety not knowing what to cook or how to do it + healthy option
 - iii. Impulsive eating with no preparation = junk food choices
- b. Home:
 - i. Messy space difficult to work in + partner gets irritated
 - ii. Waste time looking for ingredients or tools
 - iii. Duplicate items get purchased because you forgot you had some or couldn't find them

2. Executive challenges make cooking difficult for many with ADHD because

- a. Need to plan, prioritize meals
- b. An organized kitchen makes it easier to function but difficult to set up
- c. Activating to shop, cook or clean is challenging.

3. Kitchen organizing basics:

- a. Use **hidden spaces** by putting hooks on the inside door of cupboards
- b. Invest in **space makers**
 - i. Frying pan rack
 - ii. Shelf buddy
 - iii. Water bottle organizer
- c. Put items **in view to cue** you
 - i. Medication on counter not in cupboards (assuming no young children in the home)
 - ii. Main cooking utensils live in pot on countertop
- d. Use **dividers** or sectional containers to corral items e.g. food storage containers
- e. Use **caddies** or containers to store a group of items on a shelf e.g. spices, soups
- f. Ensure **easy access** to cupboards so more likely to use, find & put away stuff
- g. **Refrigerator:**
 - i. Put small containers in drawers e.g. yogurt, cheese, sour cream
 - ii. Give a theme to each door shelf e.g. dressings, pickling, Asian sauces

- iii. Use produce-saving containers to expand life of items e.g. Rubbermaid Produce Savers
- h. **Pantry:** use container system so only one place to look for items e.g, Tupperware modular mates
- i. **Functional groupings:**
 - i. Mixing bowls hold measuring cups & spoons
- j. **Create zones:**
 - i. Coffee station (cups, coffee, mugs to go, sugar, coffee maker, coffee in same cupboard or nearby)
- k. **Squirrelling reality check:**
 - i. How many items do you have in one pantry category?
 - ii. How much space does it take?
 - iii. How long will it take to consume them if don't buy anymore?
 - iv. How much money is tied in inventory of that item?

4. 5 Steps to an Organized Meal

a. Planning

- i. Shortcuts:
 - 1. Start with a 7-day plan
 - 2. Aim for 1 pan meals
 - 3. Have a buffet of sides for family to choose from
- ii. Recipe books/digital: Pick one with one image for each recipe + easy to read layout
- iii. Meal plans: avoid complicated monthly ones; use 7-day plan & repeat every week with slight variations; simplifies prep & shopping

b. Shopping

- i. Pantry staples to always have on hand: flour, milk, eggs, olive oil, butter, cream cheese, sour cream, wine, chicken stock, beef stock, cream of mushroom soup, cream of celery soup, noodles, spaghetti sauce, frozen vegetables, frozen meatballs
- ii. Shortcuts:
 - 1. Buy on sale & freeze
 - 2. Marinate while freezing
 - 3. Label container contents & date
- iii. Expand produce lifespan by using produce saving containers e.g.
 - 1. Tupperware Fridgesmarts
 - 2. Rubbermaid Produce Savers

c. Preparing**i. Shortcuts:**

1. Morning mise en place (start prepping in morning)
2. Bulk chopping when return from grocery store
3. Use kitchen helpers like mandolines & choppers

ii. Lunches:

1. Chop fruit & veggies for the week and pre-portion in small containers
2. Buy large bag of dried snacks (e.g. raisins, nuts, cheesy crackers) and separate into individual portion containers for the week

iii. Set up a snack station:

1. Bottom of cupboard, easy access by kids, pre-approved snacks, self-serve

d. Cooking**i. Shortcuts:**

1. Cook in bulk (use a large stock pot size)
2. Use an Insta-Pot or slow cooker with a timer & keep warm feature
3. Discover microwave cooking for quick cook times

ii. Mother Meat Recipes: Cook meat in large quantity once & portion out for multiple meals to freeze and pull out as need when making other recipes to save time on cooking the proteins.

1. BEEF recipe (source unknown)

Mother Meat - BEEF**Ingredients:**

- | | |
|----------|-------------------|
| • 5 lbs | Ground Beef |
| • 1 tbsp | Salt |
| • ½ tbsp | Pepper |
| • 2 cups | Celery (chopped) |
| • 2 cups | Onions (chopped) |
| • 2 cups | Peppers (chopped) |

Meal Options:

1. Minestrone soup
2. Tacos
3. Sloppy Joes
4. Chow mein
5. Spaghetti sauce
6. Stuffed peppers
7. Curry beef



2. Mother Meat – CHICKEN recipe (source unknown)

**Mother Meat - CHICKEN****Ingredients:**

- 11 lbs Chicken (4 whole roaster chickens cut up into pieces)
- 4 tsp Salt
- 2 tsp Pepper
- 3 tbsp Parsley
- tsp Basil, dried
- 1 tbsp
- Chicken stock (condensed)
- 1 Bay leaf
- 4 Carrots
- 1 Onion (chopped)
- 4 Qt Water

Meal Options:

1. Chicken casserole
2. Chicken soup
3. Enchiladas
4. Hot chicken sandwich
5. Chicken Salad
6. Chicken Pot Pie
7. Chicken chili

**e. Cleaning**

i. Shortcuts:

1. Limit number of dishes available for each family member (i.e. everyone only gets one of each: large plate, small plate, bowl, cup, glass, fork, knife, soup spoon, tea spoon to force them to wash their dishes after each meal (like in summer camp)
 2. Take limiting dishes to the next level by color coding or assign a pattern to each family member. It will be easier to identify who did not wash their dishes.
 3. If you aimed for one pot or slow cooker meals, you reduce the amount of dishes to wash.
- ii. Activation: Stack like with like to make pile seem smaller, get soapy water going, tell yourself you will only wash an easier category like dessert plates to get you going.
- iii. Chore charts: Can be used to assign roles for the week or month (like meal cooking or dish washing)

f. Getting outside help

- i. Using outside help can make life easier although may require a bigger budget. Identify which of the 5 steps is problematic for you. Consult the chart below and pick a strategy that has a green icon in the column of the step that is most difficult for you.

Getting Outside Help – Summary Guide

TYPE OF HELP		PLANNING	SHOPPING	PREPPING	COOKING	CLEANING
Take-Out & Delivery						
Online Grocery Shopping						
Weekly Meal Prep kits						
Community Kitchens						
On Site Meal Prep Centers						
Weekly Meal Delivery Service						
Personal Chef						

 = More challenging  = Requires some effort  = Easy

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