

Shop twice a week for 14 nutritious meals

T0

Hello Ladies and gentleman, have you ever experienced a situation of unable to shop for food regularly?

In which you may worry about the diet being monotonous, and also wondering if the diet is nutritionally compromised or not.

I am going to have a sharing on ways to prepare nutritious meals with varieties even though the chances of grocery shopping is limited.

We will take the scenario of preparing 14 nutritious meals by shopping twice during the week as an example.

T1

In order to prepare nutritious dishes with wide variety, in fact, is not as difficult as you imagine.

T2

The key tip is to stock up various dried Foods in the kitchen's cupboard.

They include white fungi, shitake mushrooms, black fungi, wood ears and legumes.

These dried foods are high in fibre content. Not only they add varieties into our diet, but also they are beneficial for our health.

They are good alternatives for vegetables when you have no time to shop.

T3

We can also stock up some frozen foods in the freezer compartment.

Some of you may enquire whether the frozen foods are as nutritious as the fresh foods or not.

In fact, the nutrition value of frozen foods and fresh foods are similar.

Therefore we can stock up a certain amount of frozen foods in the home freezer, such as frozen mixed vegetables, frozen chicken steak, pork chop as well as fish fillet.

As a result, we do not need to worry about not having a balanced diet during the time where grocery shopping is not easy.

T4

Other than stocking some sort of stable foods in the home freezer or the kitchen's cupboard, it is important to plan ahead and utilize what we have for our meals.

A 4-day menu planning is as follows:

T5

You can now see a 4-day menu. The food choices and the combination of each day's breakfast, Lunch and Dinner are different. The menu consists of ingredients with different colours. Let me explain how it works out:

The Food ingredients that are highlighted red are the staple foods that can be stored at the home freezer or the kitchen's cupboards regularly. They include skimmed milk, oats; frozen foods such as mixed vegetables and chicken thigh.

With the application of these staple foods, in addition to proper menu planning, it is not difficult to prepare all meals of 4 days by shopping for food only once.

T6

After deciding what to eat in the coming 4 days, we can come up with a shopping list

T7

You can see on the left of this shopping list there are the food ingredients, such as grass carp, white radish, angled luffa, prepackaged tofu, broccoli, Chinese flowering cabbage, lean pork and egg plant. On the right hand side of the shopping list, there are the amounts of food ingredient we need to buy. If you look closely to the shopping list, you may have discovered the amounts of food we require is easily purchasable in the grocery shop or the wet market.

The advantage of creating a shopping list is that we are aware of what we intend to shop and how are we managing our meal combinations. This can make sure we remember what we need to shop precisely in the grocery or the wet market and therefore saves time from wandering in the store.

T8

By Friday, it's time to consider what to eat for meals in the coming 3 days

T9

This 3-day menu had made good use of the dried food ingredients such as black-eyed pea and fresh lily bulb. Whereas frozen foods are also applied, such as frozen fish fillet. By using the dried and frozen foods, in combination with the fresh food ingredients, we have nicely arranged 6 different meals.

T10

After planning the meals for the coming 3 days, it's time for us again to arrange a shopping list for food.

T11

This shopping list also listed the food ingredients and the quantities we require to shop. Very explicit. There will not be a problem of forgetting what to buy in the grocery. We are also very confident on when to consume the food ingredients we purchase.

T12

We can consider the idea of '1 dish in 2 meals' if we are struggling to go out to shop for food sometimes.

T13

The idea of '1 dish in 2 meals' is demonstrated with the following example. For instance for lunch we had steamed minced pork patty with water chestnut. We can add some other food ingredients, such as luffa and cloud ears, together with the leftover meat patty from lunch, we created a new dish for dinner. The new dish for dinner will be minced pork cooked with luffa and cloud ears. This idea can save us from having a monotonous diet by eating the same dish again and again. Adding other food ingredients to the existing dishes creates a fresh taste as well as adding some nutrition into the old dish.

T14

You may have experienced a situation of purchasing foods for the coming few days and wondering how to store them properly, so that they will not turn bad easily.

T15

For dried foods, we can store them in a cool, dry place and away from the sunlight. We should not consume the dried foods if it is damp, looks different or gives an abnormal smell.

T16

As for the storage of the fresh food, I am going to share with you some food handling skills. Firstly cut and divide the ingredients into small portions. Lay them flat to increase the contact surface with cold air. Secondly pat dry the food surface to reduce the chance of food spoilage. Thirdly use a clean chopsticks to handle the raw food. Lastly store the ingredients in a sealed, clean plastic box.

T17

For the frozen foods, we should store them in the freezer compartment. The temperature of the freezer compartment should be equal to or lower than -18°C . The frozen foods should be consumed before its use by date. If there are many pieces of crushed ice inside the food package, it means that the food had been defrosted and re-frozen. Bacterial overgrowth may have already taken place and therefore not safe for consumer consumption.

T18

As for the storage of the fresh vegetables, we can use a clean kitchen towel to wrap up the fresh leafy greens and store them temporarily in the crisper compartment of the refrigerator. It is not recommended to wash the vegetables before putting them in the refrigerator. The vegetables will be rotten easily if they were washed before putting into the fridge. The vegetables are not recommended to be chopped too soon before cooking to avoid bacterial overgrowth and nutrient loss.

T19

So what about for the storage of cooked foods, especially for implementing the idea of '1 dish in 2 meals'?

T20

Cooked foods should be stored in the refrigerator. The left overs are recommended to be consumed within 3 days. The food should be discarded if they are found spoiled. When we reheat the chilled cooked food, they must be reheated thoroughly (with central temperature reaching 75°C or above) before serving.

T21

It is my pleasure to share with you on how to prepare 14 nutritious meals by shopping twice during the week.

For further information on health for elders, you are welcomed to access the website of the Elderly Health Service (Department of Health), or make a dial to the elderly health infoline.

Goodbye!