

Freezer Meals for Busy Families

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Variety of Strategies for Freezer Meal Planning

Make Double: Easiest by far; start here!

Exchange: Encourages variety; best for those who aren't picky and have good cooks for friends

Menu Plans: Most extensive; varying options; requires fair commitment

Benefits of Freezer Meal Planning

Reduces food waste

Cheaper than eating out

Improves nutrition

Enhances family time

Improves food safety

Allows for inclusion of family in planning & preparations

Answers the question: What's for Dinner???

Seven Steps to Menu Plans

Plan * Shop * Gather * Prep * Combine * Assemble * Freeze

Key Points

The 2-hour rule: food shouldn't be in the temperature danger zone(40-140°) for more than 2 hours

Freezing food doesn't make it safe, but if properly handled, it will keep it safe

Food quality will still deteriorate over time

Refrigerator Temp = $\leq 40^{\circ}$ Freezer Temp = $\leq 0^{\circ}$ (set even cooler before a big cooking day)

Helpful Hints

Don't make your maiden voyage a once-a-month plan...too overwhelming!

Get into the habit of using grocery and freezer inventories to stay organized

Online Resources:

Food Storage for Safety and Quality

<http://spock.fcs.uga.edu/ext/pubs/fdns/FDNS-E-119.pdf>

Preserving Food: Freezing Prepared Foods

<http://spock.fcs.uga.edu/ext/pubs/fdns/FDNS-E-43-14.pdf>

Cook Once: Eat for 2 weeks: University of Wyoming Cent\$ible Nutrition

http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/centsible/tvshows/cook_once.asp

Make Ahead Meals:

www.ca.uky.edu/hes/fcs/factshts/FN-SSB.095.PDF

Freezer Meal Planning: Utah State Cooperative Extension

http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/FN_Food_preservation_2009-01pr.pdf