

Good Grinding for Wise Dining
Strategies for Eating
Lesson 6: Meals in Minutes
“Do little steps ahead and we’ll be quickly fed!”

Action: Ask someone in the audience to assist you. Give the tally sheet to this person and have them count the number of participants in the audience. Record the number of participants on the tally sheet. At the end of the lesson, you will ask the participants 3 questions and your assistant will record the number of people agreeing with the statement on the tally sheet.

Action: Pass out “Meals in Minutes” handout. Begin lesson when everyone receives a handout.

Read the following: Today, we will talk about meal planning and ideas for making quick and easy to assemble meals and snacks.

Read the following: By taking a little bit of our time to plan our meals, we can put together healthy, quick, and budget-friendly meals. First, we should think ahead of time about what kind of foods we would like to eat, what is on sale, what foods we have at home, and how we want our food to be prepared. Then, we can create a grocery list of foods, supplies, and ingredients we will need for our meals. We can use our shopping list and check our inventory of food at home before we go to the grocery store. By using a grocery list and checking food inventory, it will help us save time and money.

A little planning can help us assemble meals in minutes. If we plan ahead we will have all of our ingredients ahead of time, so we won’t have to make an extra trip to the grocery store. We can also save time by using a slow cooker, microwave, or by making a one-pot meal.

Read the following:

Cleaning and chopping fruits and veggies can be time consuming. So we can chop and cut veggies and fruits ahead of time. We can use what we need and store the rest in containers in the refrigerator or freezer. If fruits and veggies are not going to be used within two days, freeze them in freezer bags or containers, and label them with the date. These fruits and veggies can be then be used for several recipes throughout the week. If we don't have time to clean and chop fresh fruits and veggies, we can use other forms of fruits and veggies such as frozen, canned, dried, or *100% juice*.

Grocery stores may also offer fresh or frozen pre-cut vegetables/fruits and meats for meals such as salads, stews, soups, or stir-fry. Another suggestion is to check the grocery store for ready-to-eat vegetable salads. It may be a little more expensive but it is quick and convenient. Do little steps ahead and we'll be quickly fed.

Action:

Have participants repeat the following:

Everyone repeat with me, "do little steps ahead and we'll be quickly fed!"

"Do little steps ahead and we'll be quickly fed!"

Read the following:

Another time saver is to keep staple foods and ingredients on hand so we can make multiple meals. Staples are foods that we can use often, such as eggs, milk, frozen and canned fruits and veggies, meats, soups, rice, and pasta. We want to buy only what we will use in a reasonable time. Remember, if we "no need, no buy."

When we look in our pantry we should try to use our older foods first. For example, if we bought pasta, such as spaghetti, last month and bought more pasta on sale today, we want to use the pasta we bought last month before we use the pasta we bought today.

Read the following:

To save time and to help us prepare future meals in minutes, we can also prepare a little extra food for us to use later. For example, if we are cooking chicken for a meal tonight, we can cook an extra piece of chicken so we can use it in another meal such as chicken salad, chicken noodle soup, or a chicken sandwich. We can cook extra ground beef to use later for chili, tacos, spaghetti, a casserole, or pizza. If we are not able to use the extra cooked chicken or ground beef within two days, we should freeze it. Labeling our freezer containers or bags with the date and the name of the food item is a great idea. This will help us to know what we have in our freezer and when we bought it or made it. Frozen foods do not last forever, so we should generally use them within a couple of months.

When we have a little extra time and ingredients, we can cook a double recipe or a larger portion. We can freeze our leftovers in smaller, individual portions, or exchange meals with friends and family. Doing this ahead of time will allow us to have extra meals prepared with one cooking session. Do little steps ahead and we'll be quickly fed.

Action:
Have participants repeat the following:

Everyone repeat with me, "do little steps ahead and we'll be quickly fed!"

"Do little steps ahead and we'll be quickly fed!"

Read the following:

We can plan our favorite meals so that they are nutritious and well balanced. At each meal we should try to include some type of protein/meat, vegetable, fruit, a starch or grain, and milk.

Read the following:

Creamed tuna is a good example of a balanced meal in minutes because it includes all of these groups and it's really easy and quick to make. It has milk and tuna, and any type of veggies we want, such as onions, mushrooms and carrots.

Add a can of *cream of mushroom soup* for flavor and texture. Then, serve the creamed tuna over leftover brown rice, noodles, or a slice of whole wheat toast. Enjoy water, milk, *100% juice*, or tea with our creamed tuna. To complete our meal, we can eat some fruit that's in season as our dessert.

Action:
Ask the following question:

Who would like to share some of their favorite “meals in minutes” ideas?

*Gently encourage people to participate. Thank participants for sharing.

Read the following:

Another example of a meal in minutes is an *English muffin* pizza. Split a whole wheat *English muffin* or *bagel* in half, or use any type of bread that we have at home. Spread pizza, tomato, or leftover spaghetti sauce on each half of the *English muffin*. Then add *turkey pepperoni* or leftover meats. We can add more color, flavor and nutrients by adding veggies such as spinach leaves, mushrooms, bell peppers, onions, and broccoli, or fruits such as pineapple, mango, or any other fruits or veggies we have available. Sprinkle low-fat cheese on the top and heat the pizza until the cheese is melted, using a microwave, toaster oven, or regular oven. Add a leafy green salad, fruit salad, or veggie sticks for a great, balanced meal. Do little steps ahead and we'll be quickly fed.

Action:
Have participants repeat the following:

Everyone repeat with me, “do little steps ahead and we'll be quickly fed!”

“Do little steps ahead and we'll be quickly fed!”

Read the following:

After we have made our meals in minutes, we should know how to store our foods safely. Cooked foods, leftovers, and perishable foods should not be left out at room temperature for more than two hours. Put leftovers in shallow containers for quick cooling of our foods. Then, we can store our foods in the refrigerator or freezer as leftovers or as another meal in the future.

It's also a great idea to freeze leftovers that will not be eaten within two days. Remember, when storing leftovers, don't wait....refrigerate!

Action: Everyone repeat with me, "don't wait....refrigerate!"
Have participants repeat the following: "Don't wait...refrigerate!"

Action: What shall we drink with our meal in minutes?
Ask the following question:

Read the following: Water is a great beverage to drink with our meals. It is very important for our body to function. How many of us know that water decreases friction in many parts of our body such as our joints, mouth, digestive system, nose, throat, eyes, and stomach? It is in the form of saliva for our mouth and digestive system, and mucus for our nose, throat, eyes, and stomach. Water also cushions our joints and protects our tissues and organs from shock and damage.

How many of us get bored of drinking plain water? How about trying *seltzer* or *sparkling water* for a calorie-free drink, or add it to *100% juice* for a refreshing beverage. So, remember to drink fluids throughout the day to keep us healthy.

Read the following: Now, I am going to read three statements. Please raise your hand if you agree with the statement. The first statement is: I plan to use "meals in minutes" suggestions to make my meals and snacks.

Read the following: Ask your assistant to count the number of participants who raise their hand and record on the tally sheet.

Action: How many of you agree with this next statement: I plan to refrigerate or freeze my leftover foods right away. Please raise your hand if you agree.
Read the following:

Action: Ask your assistant to count the number of participants who raise their hand and record on the tally sheet.

Read the following: The last statement is: Drinking fluids throughout the day is important to keep me healthy. How many people agree with this last statement?

Action: Ask your assistant to count the number of participants who raise their hand and record on the tally sheet.

Read the following: That's the end of our talk. Thank you for listening. Please check with your doctor or health care professional before making dietary changes.