

Top 10 Reasons Why You Hate to Cook For 1 or 2!!

10. His tastes have changed!
9. It's not fun! It was more fun when the kids were home, but they didn't eat green stuff either!
8. I hate eating alone!
7. Maybe I'll lose weight, but it hasn't happened yet!
6. I hate leftovers!
5. It's easier to pop in a frozen dinner!
4. I love to cook but I hate to do dishes!
3. Nothing sounds good!
2. I'm in a rut!
1. It's easier to go out!

10. *His tastes have changed!* Learn to cook new dishes.
9. *It's not fun! It was more fun when the kids were home, but they didn't eat green stuff either!* It really wasn't, remember all the whining and all the dislikes, and forcing them to eat the stuff you loved and they hated? Now is the best time in your life, you can eat what you **love** and you don't have to hear any complaints.
8. *I hate eating alone!* Invite a neighbor who is alone too. Remember that it is better to be alone then be lonely, play dinner music, fix a pretty dinner tray, light a candle...
7. *Maybe I'll lose weight, but it hasn't happened yet!* Eating sensibly is a much better way to lose weight than starving yourself, and no, popcorn is not a meal! Eating right, you feel better over time. Your mind stays sharp, not senile! You fight disease better.
6. *I hate leftovers!* Then don't make any! Or - give them away! Many people around you do love food and they would love to have some of your cooking for themselves. I bake a cake and then take it to all the lonely, or single people I know. I save the rest for us and that way I don't eat it all myself! Single guys, young people, busy mothers, working mothers, shut ins, children, people who take lunch to work... Nothing says you have to eat your leftovers! If you like leftovers like I do, freeze some for future so they don't turn green. Freeze only what you will eat, save some for tomorrow's lunch.
5. *It's easier to pop in a frozen dinner!* That's okay - sometimes, but make sure you read your frozen dinners. Not all frozen dinners are created equal! Make your own frozen dinners. Tastes better and much cheaper. Next time the kids are home, make up a couple of "TV" dinners for yourself and stick them in the freezer.
4. *I love to cook, but I hate to do dishes!* Use paper plates. They're not just for when the kids come home. Use your microwave more, less dishes. Buy a dishwasher. Get to know someone who does?
- 3-2. *Nothing sounds good! I'm in a rut!* Time to check out a new cookbook at the library. Swap ideas with a friend. Call someone up and ask what they're making for dinner. Think of all the things you cooked when the kids were home, that you loved and can eat now! Think of all the things your mother cooked that you were scared to serve your family but that you're hungry for.
1. *It's easier to go out!* It might be easier, although in rural Wisconsin where there is not a restaurant around the corner, I beg to differ. Just remember how much more you eat in a restaurant than you would at home. Think of how you can request your food be cooked how you want it. Think of how much more it costs, and spend some of that on restocking your shelves! Eating out is okay, just not a regular basis.

Rate Your Solo Cooking Habits

Which best describes your eating habits? (Answer "always", "sometimes" or "never".)

1. Even though I live alone or with another person, I still cook.	Always	Sometimes	Never
2. I eat planned meals and snacks regularly.	Always	Sometimes	Never
3. To reduce waste, I plan uses for leftovers before they spoil.	Always	Sometimes	Never
4. I keep a variety of foods on hand so I always have something to make meals.	Always	Sometimes	Never
5. I plan meals and shopping trips.	Always	Sometimes	Never
6. I take a turn with friends or family making a meal to share together.	Always	Sometimes	Never
7. I supplement ready-to-eat frozen meals with breads, milk, fruits or vegetables as needed.	Always	Sometimes	Never
8. I set the table attractively and plan a pleasant time when I eat alone.	Always	Sometimes	Never

How Did You Do?

Add the number of answers in each category to rate your solo eating habits.

ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	NEVER
Your crop yield is at an all-time high! If you answered "always" 5 or more times, you are a smart solo eater. Keep up the good work! READ ON FOR NEW IDEAS.	Your harvest is near! If you answered "sometimes" for most of the questions, you are on your way to making cooking for 1 or 2 easy. READ ON TO LEARN MORE FUN AND HEALTHY COOKING SOLO IDEAS.	Sorry, crop hailed out. If you answered "never" for most of the questions, you need to pick up some new cooking solo ideas. KEEP READING TO LEARN HOW TO COOK FOR ONE OR TWO—EASILY AND HEALTHFULLY!

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Healthy Eating Alone

By Laurel L. Kubin, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension
Director, Larimer County
May 1998

Food tastes better when there's someone sitting across the table. A good part of the pleasure of eating comes from enjoying other's company during a meal.

People living alone often neglect to eat nutritious meals because there is less incentive to cook. Those who eat alone often select diets that are below par in recommended nutrients, grazing through the day or indulge at one meal and skipping others because they have no one to eat with.

To make the most of eating alone, try the following ideas.

- ★ **The eyes have it:** add pizzazz to dining by dressing up the table with a placemat, flowers, candles and other special touches to remind you that eating can be a pleasant, leisurely experience. Eat colorful meals. A plate containing several colors looks more appetizing. Sliced red tomatoes, green peas and orange carrot sticks with browned meat makes a more appealing meal than white or brown foods.
- ★ **Texture tips:** eat crispy or shredded low-sugar cereals in yogurt for breakfast. Include different textures within the same meal--soft, chewy, crisp and firm. Adapt the textures to chewing ability. Even those who need a softer diet can try soft vegetables or fruits.
- ★ **Enjoy companionship:** those who live alone can invite a friend over for dinner, eat out once a week with friends, plan lunches with others or visit a senior center at lunchtime. Prepare a new recipe each week and invite friends over for a tasting party or potluck meal. When dining out alone, choose restaurants that serve family style with large groups of customers seated at the same table. You may end up with good company.
- ★ **Convenience counts:** buy prepackaged mixed salad greens and salad bar vegetables, especially green peppers, spinach, broccoli, carrots and tomatoes. Salads made with these are great sources of vitamins A and C. Add salad bar vegetables to stir-fry meals. Combine a prepackaged frozen entree with fresh or frozen vegetables and fresh fruits. Watch the entree label for sodium and fat content. When you cook, make a large batch of food and freeze left overs in small portions for later.
- ★ **Breakfast bonus:** even if you're in a hurry or don't feel hungry, take time for breakfast. Spread a thin layer of peanut butter on whole wheat toast and add sliced fruit. Eat near a window and watch the sunrise or birds in the trees. Use your best dishes and feel special.



COOKING SOLO

HE-516, February 1993
(Reviewed and reprinted February 1994)
Joye M. Bond, Nutrition Specialist

Preparing a meal for a family or guests often brings a sense of accomplishment, but making a dinner you'll be eating alone can seem like a big effort with small reward. Consequently, many of us pay little attention to the food we prepare and how we prepare it. That's too bad because it doesn't have to be difficult or time-consuming to cook delicious, healthy meals. And eating well brings its own rewards like enjoyment, good health and reduced risk of such diseases as cancer and heart disease.

Food alone cannot make you healthy. Good health also depends on your heredity, your environment and the health care available to you. Your lifestyle is also important to your health -- how much you exercise, smoke, drink alcoholic beverages or abuse drugs, for example. The USDA has developed the Dietary Guidelines for healthy Americans who are age 2 years and over. The guidelines reflect recommendations of nutrition authorities who agree that enough is known about the effect of diet on health to encourage Americans to follow some specific guidelines. A diet based on these guidelines can help you to keep healthy and may improve your health.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans

7. Eat a variety of foods
8. Maintain healthy weight
9. Choose a diet low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol
10. Choose a diet with plenty of vegetables, fruits, and grain products
11. Use sugars only in moderation
12. Use salt and sodium only in moderation
13. If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation

The first two guidelines form the framework for your eating patterns: "Eat a variety of foods" and "Maintain healthy weight." The next two guidelines stress the need for many Americans to change their diets to be lower in fat, especially saturated fat, and higher in complex carbohydrates such as starches found in pasta, breads, cereals, dry beans and potatoes. The last three guidelines suggest only moderate use of sugars, salt and alcoholic beverages.

Getting Ready to Cook for One or Two

If you're like most Americans, you're not interested in making a career out of meal planning and preparation -- and you don't have to if you invest a little time up front to organize and prepare. Take a few minutes each week to decide what you want to eat during the coming week. Try to keep your meal strategies simple and easy.

Do you sometimes go to the store with a growling stomach and then come home with foods you didn't really need? A plan you've made can help you take advantage of specials, if you check your newspaper for sales and coupons that fit your budget and menu. A plan can help you cut down on impulse buying and help you avoid waste because you'll know the right kind of food and package size to fit your needs. And lastly, a plan can save you time because you won't have to go back to the store for items you forgot.

While a plan is important, you'll have more success if you allow yourself flexibility. And, be sure to plan a few quick and easy stand-by meals that can be simply heated for those times when you're too rushed or tired to cook. If you're prepared, you'll be far less likely to resort to grabbing less healthy foods on the run. Let's look at the basics you'll need to get started.

Surveying Your Kitchen

An adequately stocked kitchen will make it easier to whip up an impromptu supper for guests or to prepare a quick bite before an important meeting. You don't need a gourmet kitchen to cook and eat well. Just make sure you have the basics.

Kitchen Basics

- Non-stick skillet for stir-frying or pan broiling with little fat
- Vegetable steamer
- Two saucepans -- a small one for soups and a larger one for cooking pasta or steaming vegetables
- Knives -- a paring knife for chopping and dicing, a larger one for cutting meats, and a serrated knife
- Wooden or plastic spoons that won't damage your non-stick skillet
- Measuring cups and measuring spoons
- Colander/strainer
- Wire whisk
- Grater with assorted grating surfaces
- Hand or small electric mixer
- Plastic cutting board
- Vegetable peeler
- Can and bottle opener
- Slotted spoon, ladle, non-metal pancake turner, two-tined fork
- Loaf pan, cookie sheet, roasting pan, muffin tin, cake pan
- Small casserole dishes
- Toaster/broiler oven -- saves energy for small meals
- Microwave and microwave cookware -- a good investment if you use it for more than warming up coffee
- Small coffee maker
- You may want other appliances that save time and effort such as a blender, small food processor, electric skillet, wok, slow cooker or pressure cooker

Your cabinets don't have to be bulging with exotic ingredients either. Just make sure you have the basics on hand:

- An assortment of herbs, spices and extracts such as garlic powder, minced onion,

pepper, oregano, basil, bay leaf, chili powder, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger and vanilla.
Read labels to avoid seasonings with high sodium content such as lemon pepper, seasoning salt and salad seasoning

- Vegetable oil for cooking and salad dressings
- Low-sodium bouillon
- Nonfat dry milk for recipes that call for milk
- Flour, sugar, baking soda, cornstarch, baking powder, salt
- Condiments such as vinegar, mustard, catsup and jellies
- Rice and pasta
- Dry beans and lentils
- Canned tomatoes and sauce
- Canned tuna

You may have other staples to add to this list like coffee or peanut butter.

Shopping for One Or Two

The variety of foods found in today's grocery stores can make it difficult to shop wisely and easily, and shopping for one or two poses several additional challenges:

- How can you purchase small enough quantities, especially when buying fresh foods?
- What do you do when your favorite foods come only in family-size packages?
- How do you get the best value for your money?
- Frozen microwave dinners are quick, but how do you choose the healthiest ones?

The answers may be easier than you think!

Several rules of thumb can increase your speed and efficiency when shopping.

RULE #1. Organize Your Shopping List

If your shopping list is organized in the same order as the grocery store layout, then you'll spend less time retracing your steps to pick up items you overlooked on the list. If your list is random, your shopping will be too.

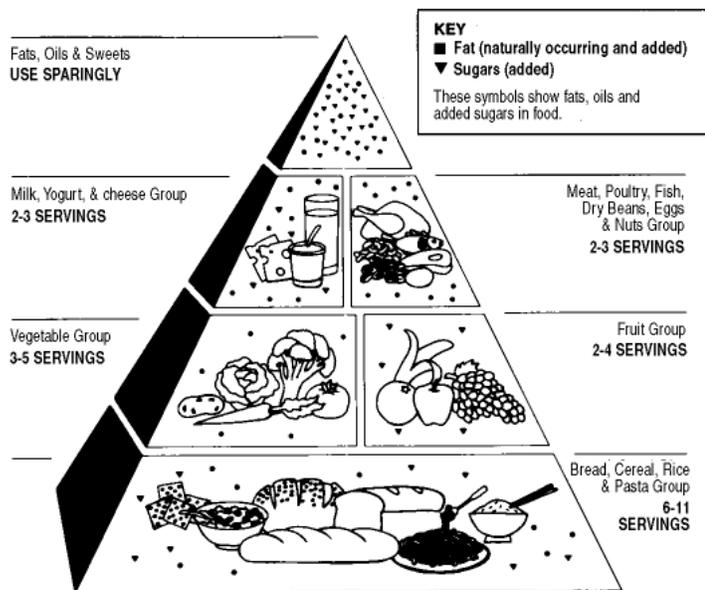
RULE #2. Shop Off-Hours

If possible, shop at off-hours -- later evenings, and Sunday through Wednesday during the day. There will be less congestion in the aisles and fewer people at the checkout to wait behind.

RULE #3. Never Shop When You Are Hungry

Studies have shown that hungry shoppers not only purchase more than they had planned to, but they also spend more time exploring aisles they do not normally frequent.

FOOD GUIDE PYRAMID



When you shop, keep in mind the Dietary Guidelines. The USDA has developed the Food Guide Pyramid to help us visualize the foods and relative proportions of each that we need to put the dietary guidelines into practice. To meet your nutritional needs and bring variety and balance into your diet, select from the following food groups as shown on the Pyramid.

Bread, Cereal, Rice and Pasta

These foods provide complex carbohydrates (starches) which are an important source of energy. They also provide vitamins, minerals and fiber. Six to 11 servings of this group are recommended per day. Count as a serving: 1 slice of bread; 1/2 bun, bagel or English muffin; 1/2 cup of cooked cereal, rice or pasta. Enriched and whole-grain products are among the most economical sources of vitamins and minerals. Some money-saving buying tips include:

- Buy regular-type rice and oats. The instant types cost over twice as much per serving.
- Add your own seasonings and sauces to rice and pasta.
- Look for bargains on day-old bread and freeze it.
- Buy cereal in large boxes instead of small, separate packages and package your own.
- For items that you use only occasionally, buy from self-serve bulk bins, if your store has them.

Vegetables

Vegetables provide vitamins, minerals and fiber. They are naturally low in fat and 3 to 5 servings are recommended per day. Count as a serving: 1 cup raw leafy greens or 1/2 cup of other kinds, 3/4 cup juice. Do you avoid buying fresh vegetables because you think they'll spoil in your refrigerator before you can use them? Before you cross them off your list try these suggestions:

- Wash vegetables when ready to use; they will last longer. One exception is a head of lettuce that can be washed all at once and stored in a plastic bag for about 4 days or in one of those popular plastic lettuce keepers where it will keep "almost forever!"
- Buy vegetables in season -- they'll be cheaper.
- Place unused portions of green peppers and onions on a tray or cookie sheet in the freezer. After they are frozen, pop into freezer bags to use in casseroles or other cooked dishes.
- If you are too busy to peel and chop, and don't mind the expense, buy small portions of fresh, chopped vegetables from the grocery store salad bar to steam or stir-fry. They are more expensive per pound, but not more costly overall if you buy a large

- amount and end up throwing much away due to spoilage.
- Choose fresh vegetables that will keep well for a week or more, such as beets, cabbage, carrots, celery, parsnips, potatoes and winter squash.
 - Buy fresh produce when it's on special. Have fresh vegetables now, and blanch and freeze the remaining portions for later. Broccoli, cauliflower, peas, corn and tomatoes freeze well.
 - Fresh produce is great, but don't be afraid to shop for frozen vegetables. They are comparable to fresh in nutritional value and can be micro waved, steamed or marinated just like the fresh ones.
 - Buy plain canned or plain frozen vegetables instead of those with added seasonings and sauces or those sold in boil-in-the-bag packages, which are usually more expensive.

Fruits

Two to 4 servings per day of fruits and fruit juices provide important nutrients like vitamins A and C and potassium. Fruit serving sizes are 1 medium apple, orange or banana; 1/2 cup diced fruit or 3/4 cup of juice. Fruits are naturally low in fat and sodium. Apples, bananas, oranges, grapefruit, grapes, melons, nectarines, peaches and pears keep well or are easily used. Just like vegetables, buy fruit in season to save money. Keep fruit that doesn't need to be refrigerated on the table where you'll see it and remember to eat it. Eating whole fruits provides needed fiber, but if you like juice, read the label to make sure you're getting 100 percent juice and not fruit drink. Fruits canned in light syrups or juices provide fewer calories and a more "true" fruit flavor.

Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs and Nuts

This group provides protein, B vitamins, iron and zinc. Have two to three servings daily for a total of about 6 ounces. Two to three ounces of cooked lean meat, poultry or fish count as a serving. One-half cup cooked dry beans, 1 egg, or 2 tablespoons of peanut butter count as 1 ounce of meat. For meats, use lowfat cooking methods like broiling or roasting and limit your portion sizes to lower fat. Make grains, vegetables and fruit the focus of your meals by using small amounts of meat as ingredients to add flavor, texture and protein to salads, casseroles or soups. This is a great place to use leftover meat, fish or poultry.

- Meat, poultry and fish is often cheaper if you buy the "family size." When you get it home divide the purchase into portions for one or two, wrap with heavy duty foil or freezer wrap, label and freeze. If you want to freeze the meat in larger packages, plastic wrap can be placed between individual meat patties or pieces so one or two servings can be easily removed.
- When cooking dry beans or peas, soak and cook extra and freeze in small portions.
- One-half dozen eggs can be purchased in most stores if you ask.

Milk, Yogurt and Cheese

Two to 3 servings per day of this food group provide protein, vitamins and minerals -- especially calcium. One cup of milk or yogurt, 1-1/2 ounces of natural cheese like cheddar, or 2 ounces of process cheese like Velveeta are considered to be a serving. Since cottage cheese is lower in calcium than most cheeses, 1 cup of cottage cheese is only 1/2 serving of milk. There are many lowfat and non-fat choices in this food group and choosing them can help reduce fat in your diet.

- If you need only a small amount of cheese, buy it from the deli department if your store has one.
- Buy nonfat dry milk and dry buttermilk for cooking. They are shelf-stable for long periods of time and can help you avoid throwing away fresh milk that has spoiled because you only needed a small amount.

Fats, Oils and Sweets

The small tip of the Pyramid shows fats, oils and sweets. These are foods such as salad dressings and oils, cream, butter, margarine, sugars, soft drinks, candies and sweet desserts. These foods provide calories but little else nutritionally. Most people should use them sparingly.

Now that we've taken a quick look at the Dietary Guidelines for Americans using the Food Guide Pyramid, we need to answer some of the questions we raised at the beginning of this section.

To Buy or Not To Buy In Bulk

Prepackaged, individual-serving items tend to be more expensive than larger packages or bulk quantities. At times you may prefer the convenience of individual portions, while at other times you may want to save money by buying in bulk. For example, when time is at a premium and money isn't a big issue, you may opt for a package of skinned, ready-to-cook chicken breasts. When your schedule is less busy and you want to save money, buy a whole chicken, cut it up yourself and freeze in meal-size servings.

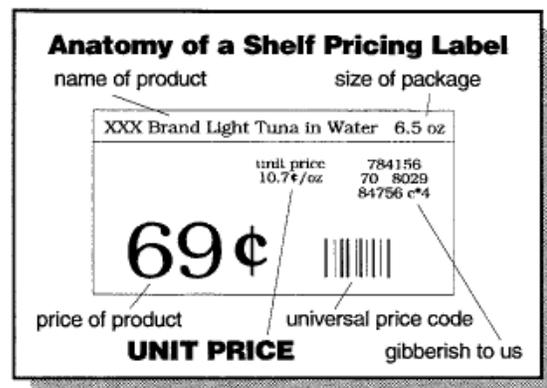
Avoiding waste may be another reason to keep small-quantity items on hand. Opening a large can of fruit and throwing half of it away because it spoiled is no way to save money!

You will need to decide for yourself what is most important in each situation: time-savings? convenience? saving money? storage space? flavor? nutrition? a combination of needs? Take a little time and think about what needs are most important to you and how you will meet those needs.

How Do You Decide What is a Good Value for Your Money?

There are two basic ways to calculate price-value using either unit pricing or price per serving. Let's look at unit pricing first. Unit price is the price per ounce, pound, quart, pint or other unit. It gives you a quick way to make comparisons. Generally, the price of the container is in bold print and the price per unit is in small, lighter print, or an actual statement of which price is the unit price is made.

If the unit prices are not listed, divide the total cost by the number of basic units (ounces, grams, pints, quarts and so forth), then compare. For example, which is the best buy: the store brand



frozen green beans at 68 cents for 10 ounces, or the name brand for \$1.19 for 9 ounces? The store brand beans at 6.8 cents per ounce are a better buy than the name brand beans at 13.2 cents per ounce.

What about the next example? An 18-ounce box of cornflakes sells for \$1.49, and 6 ounces of cornflakes packaged in 3/4 ounce packages costs \$1.35. Which is the better buy? The 18-ounce box of cereal at 8.3 cents per ounce is a better buy than the 6-ounce individual pack size at 22.5 cents per ounce.

1. Compare unit prices for different brands of food. Which is the better buy?

Store brand frozen green beans, 10-ounce package	
PRICE 68¢	UNIT PRICE 6.8¢ per ounce

OR

Name brand frozen green beans, seasoned, 9-ounce package	
PRICE \$1.19	UNIT PRICE 13.2¢ per ounce

The store brand beans at 6.8¢ per ounce are a better buy than the name brand seasoned beans at 13.2¢ per ounce.

2. Compare unit prices for foods in different package sizes. Which is the better buy?

Name brand cornflakes, 18-ounce box	
PRICE \$1.49	UNIT PRICE 8.3¢ per ounce

OR

Name brand cornflakes individual packs, 6 ounces (3/4 ounce each)	
PRICE \$1.35	UNIT PRICE 22.5¢ per ounce

The 18-ounce box of cereal at 8.3¢ per ounce is a better buy than the 6-ounce individual pack size at 22.5¢ per ounce.

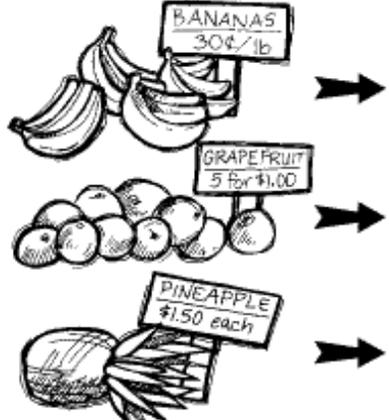
Many times a larger package may be less expensive, but don't buy it if you cannot use the larger quantity. Also consider what the food will be used for. The least expensive is not always equal in quality to more expensive brands. But it is not always the worst quality either. Consider alternative forms like fresh, frozen, refrigerated, canned or dried and also consider the intended use, brand, grade, quantity, size and convenience.

Now let's take a look at how to determine price per serving. Some foods have parts you can't eat, like bones, cores or pits. For these foods, the lowest price per pound is not always the best buy. To find the best buy, you need to compare the costs of the amounts you need for a serving. From past experience you

probably know how much of different foods are required for a serving. If not, more information on this subject is available from your county NDSU Extension office.

Look at this example. First, think of how many servings you can get from a package or market unit -- such as a pound of bananas. Then divide the number of servings into the price for the package or market unit to find the cost of a serving.

Compare the cost for a SERVING.
Which of the following three are the better buys?



 <p>BANANAS 30¢/lb</p>	→	<p>If 1 pound of bananas gives you about 3 servings, then 30¢ for a pound ÷ 3 servings = 10¢ for a serving.</p>
 <p>GRAPEFRUIT 5 for \$1.00</p>	→	<p>If 5 grapefruits cut in half give you 10 servings, then \$1.00 for 5 ÷ 10 servings = 10¢ for a serving.</p>
 <p>PINEAPPLE \$1.50 each</p>	→	<p>If 1 pineapple cut up gives you about 6 servings, then \$1.50 each ÷ 6 servings = 25¢ for a serving.</p>

Bananas at 1 pound for 30¢ and grapefruits at 5 for \$1.00 are the better buys.

The Frozen Microwave Dinner Debate

Frozen microwave dinners make quick and easy meals, but be sure to read the nutrition information carefully. Some dinners may be relatively low in calories but supply a high percentage of those calories from fat. Remember that your average intake of total dietary fat should be no more than 30 percent of your total calories. An easy rule of thumb is to choose, most of the time, microwave dinners with no more than 3 grams of fat per 100 calories. This does not mean that you should never eat foods containing higher percentages of fat, but over a period of a week or so, lowfat foods should balance out the higher fat dishes.

Check the label for the dinner's sodium content. Although sodium is essential to healthy bodies, too much may contribute to high blood pressure in some people. Salt is only one source of sodium and many processed foods contain a variety of other sodium compounds such as monosodium glutamate (MSG), baking soda (sodium bicarbonate), sodium benzoate, sodium caseinate and others. Try to select frozen dinners with 1,000 or less milligrams of sodium.

Cooking for One or Two

Once you have the basic strategies down, and shopping under control, cooking can be a simple process. Again, you are faced with challenges: perhaps a tight budget, a crowded schedule or loneliness at meal time. Take heart! Whatever your circumstances, you can meet these challenges with success. Here are some ways to make cooking for one or two easy and fun.

- Stir-fry prechopped vegetables from the grocery produce section and serve with rice and beans.
- If you have a crockpot, put diced chicken, vegetables, liquid and spices into it in the morning and come home to ready-to-eat stew.
- Make super spuds by topping them with nonfat yogurt, barbecue sauce, lowfat cottage cheese and chives, sauteed onions and vegetables or chili.
- When making an oven meal, bake potatoes, muffins or rice at the same time and

freeze for later use. Heat in a microwave, toaster oven or oven for a quick meal accompaniment.

- Prepare a week's supply of sandwiches and freeze them. Peanut butter, chicken, turkey, ham and lowfat cheese make good fillings. Avoid using very moist fillings with mayonnaise or salad dressing which separate when frozen (you can add these when you eat the sandwich). Use the frozen sandwiches within two weeks.
- Make a favorite family-size casserole, line several one-portion casserole dishes with foil, fill with the casserole, cover with foil and place in the freezer. When it is frozen solid, lift the wrapped food from the dish and return food to freezer.
- When you are ready to heat the casserole just place the foil container in the dish again and heat.

Convenience foods are the salvation of many singles, but they often lack the nutritional quality, texture and flavor of home-cooked foods. You can boost nutrition and enhance the flavor of these foods by adding your favorite spices, vegetables or meat. Try the following ideas.

- Add fresh onions, mushrooms and peppers to canned spaghetti sauce.
- Top frozen pizza with tomatoes, peppers and mushrooms.
- Mix yellow squash, green peas and grated carrots with a prepared rice mix.
- Add fresh onions, peppers, beans and tomato sauce to cooked rice.
- Add chopped green onion, celery, and a touch of garlic powder to spice up canned tomato soup.
- Add broccoli florets, mushrooms and a bit of grated than cheese to a microwave-baked potato.
- Try a breakfast of frozen waffles. They're more expensive making your own, but they're quick. Top them with fresh or frozen fruit, hot applesauce or fruited lowfat yogurt.
- Serve fruit and vegetables as side dishes to frozen microwave dinners.

Cutting Recipes

What about cutting recipes that make more than one or two portions? There's no simple answer as to whether a recipe can be cut successfully. It often takes some experimentation to get satisfactory results, but here are a few suggestions.

- Use a recipe with quantities that are easy to divide to make arithmetic easier.
- Add seasonings a little at a time. The recipe may need more than half.
- Use smaller dishes and pans for smaller quantities.
- To halve 3 eggs, use two and decrease the liquid by 2 to 3 tablespoons.
- Check doneness for halved cake, casserole, meat loaf and other dishes at least 5 to 10 minutes before the original recipe's suggested time.
- Keep notes about what works and what doesn't.

No matter how carefully meals are planned, left-overs are bound to occur. Fortunately, it is not difficult to put most of them to use.

Fruit

- Canned or fresh fruit can be added to salads, pureed and used as pancake sauce or on

- toast, or placed on top of roasted chicken.
- Fruit juice can be frozen in ice cube trays and used for flavoring and chilling fruit drinks.
- Canned or fresh fruit can be added to muffin, quick bread or pancake batter.

Vegetables

- Cooked vegetables can be used in an omelette, in a casserole, in soups, or marinated in a nonfat Italian salad dressing for a quick cold salad.
- Chopped raw onions, celery or green peppers can be frozen in freezer bags or containers for use in soups, stews or casseroles.

Breads and cereals

- Make crumbs for topping or breading for chicken or fish.
- Use for French toast.
- Make melba toast -- remove crust, roll thinly and bake at 150 degrees F until crisp.
- Add cooked macaroni to a casserole or soup, or use cold in salads.
- Stir-fry cooked rice with chopped vegetables, add leftover meat or poultry at the last minute and serve with low sodium soy sauce.
- Add cooked rice to puddings or casseroles.

Meals on the Run

Sometimes it is much easier to stop by a fast food drive-through or send out for food, rather than make it yourself. Carry-out meals pose a challenge, but you can still enjoy healthful eating using the following tips.

Carrying Out

Until recently, the only choices at fast food restaurants were fat-laden hamburgers, fries and shakes. But times are changing and now there are broiled chicken sandwiches, lowfat milk and an array of salads available. Some of the best carry-out meals come from delis and restaurants that prepare sandwiches while you wait. That way you can specify exactly what you want.

Ordering In

Pizza used to be about the only prepared food you could count on for home delivery. Now, sometimes even in small cities, you can have Chinese food, Italian food or a variety of sandwiches delivered to your door. Frozen, home-delivered food is available, even in rural areas. To round out your home-delivered meal, add fruit, vegetables and milk.

If pizza is your choice, choose a thin-crust, vegetable-topped pizza with a single order of cheese. For Chinese carry-out select a pork, chicken, seafood or lean beef entree with assorted vegetables.

When eating at a fast food restaurant, pick up the printed nutrition information available. If you don't see nutrition brochures or posters, just ask a manager for the information. For additional help with making carry-out, fast food and order-in choices, use the Guide to Meals on the Run.

Sometimes eating alone is a welcome time of privacy and quiet. At other times it can seem

lonely. If you would prefer to have mealtime company more often, look around for others in the same situation. Find one or two neighbors, co-workers or friends and invite each other for dinner once a week. For those times when you are happy to eat alone, create a pleasant setting for yourself. Set the table, add flowers, candles or other table decorations and play soft, soothing music. Eat slowly and savor each bite. Pamper yourself as you would a guest -- you deserve it!

Guide to Meals on the Run

	CHOOSE MORE OFTEN	CHOOSE LESS OFTEN
Fast Food	<p>Broiled or grilled chicken sandwich</p> <p>Single hamburger</p> <p>Toppings: mustard, onions, tomatoes, peppers</p> <p>Baked potatoes stuffed with veggies (hold the butter, sour cream and cheese sauce)</p> <p>Submarine sandwiches with lean poultry or meat and fresh vegetables</p> <p>Bagel with egg and ham</p> <p>Pancakes with moderate amounts of syrup and margarine</p> <p>Plain English muffins</p> <p>Fruit juice</p>	<p>Breaded, fried chicken sandwich or chicken nuggets</p> <p>Double hamburger; cheeseburger</p> <p>Toppings: mayonnaise, tartar sauce</p> <p>French fries or hashbrowns</p> <p>High-fat dressings like olive oil and mayonnaise, sausage and cheese fillings</p> <p>Biscuits with sausage and gravy</p> <p>French toast</p> <p>High-fat muffins</p> <p>High-fat shakes or malts</p>
Salad Bar	<p>Fresh vegetables</p> <p>Fresh fruit</p> <p>Chickpeas (garbanzo) or kidney beans</p> <p>Low-calorie or oil and vinegar dressings (in moderate servings)</p>	<p>Marinated vegetables</p> <p>Fruit in heavy syrups</p> <p>Lots of cheese</p> <p>High-fat creamy dressings</p>
Deli Food	<p>Sliced turkey sandwich with tomato</p> <p>Sliced chicken with mustard</p>	<p>Pastrami or salami sandwich</p> <p>Chicken salad or tuna salad sandwich</p>

	Lean roast beef sandwich Whole grain breads or buns, bagels	Ham and cheese sandwich, hot dog Croissants, high-fat muffins
Italian Food	Pasta in tomato sauce, red clam sauce or marinara Minestrone soup Steamed or poached foods (affogato) Chicken cacciatore	Spaghetti with meatballs; pasta with pesto or alfredo (cream) sauce Antipasto Breaded or fried foods Veal parmigiana
Chinese Food	Steamed dumplings, clear soups, (won ton, hot and sour) Stir-fried tofu, chicken, lean pork and beef or seafood with vegetables Steamed rice	Fried won ton, eggrolls, crispy noodles Crispy, batter-dipped foods such as shrimp or chicken; spare ribs Fried rice
Mexican Food	Fajitas Gazpacho Chili verde Chili Arroz con pollo (chicken with rice) Red or green salsa Mexican salad (hold the shell)	Toppings: sour cream, guacamole, con queso (cheese) Fried tortillas, chimichangas and dips Chorizo (sausages)

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