

# Planning Pays Off

Don't Forget to Eat!

**Consider your meal options and make a plan in advance.**

**Stick with healthy ideas. Avoid the temptation to lean on heavily processed, prepackaged food or takeout.**

**A little planning now makes life easier in the long run.**



Depending on how much of a planner you are, you might take all, some or none of these tips. At the very least, I encourage you to have a meal or two on hand for your first day home. Having to run to the store for food will be the last thing you'll want to do.

There are a few ways to think about meal planning. First, you may have friends and family who want to bring meals. This is amazingly helpful, and requires very little organization on your part. There are several scheduling websites available to help facilitate these offers (Meal Train, Take Them a Meal, Food Tidings, Perfect Potluck, Sign Up Genius). Many of these sites allow you to notify your helpers of any food allergies or avoidances, and select when you'd most appreciate deliveries.

Second, if you have freezer space available, you can stock up on healthy food options before the baby is born - think soups, marinated meats, pre-assembled burritos, simple things that need only be tossed in the oven or heated quickly on the stove. You can spend an afternoon chopping, prepping and labeling meals, and save yourself a lot of time in the long run. Alternatively, a "fill the freezer" party makes for a nice (and useful!) baby shower activity.

And finally, have a list of meals and snacks that you can assemble quickly when you are home with the baby. Make it even easier by having dry ingredients on hand and a shopping list for perishables made. It'll be easier to ask someone to go to the grocery store for you if you've got a list ready to go.

# Planning Pays Off - Don't Forget to Eat!

Use this handy worksheet to brainstorm ideas. Next, make a list of what you can make now. Finally, make a list of perishables and hang it on your fridge. Whoever does your first round of grocery shopping will be thankful for the organization!

## Main Meals

You'll want to have foods that are easy to make, easy to eat, nutritious, and familiar (now is not the time for expanding culinary horizons, ok?). Bonus points if the meal can be assembled ahead of time and/or frozen. Need inspiration? The internet is full of ideas, but check out [Once a Month Meals](#), [Epicurious](#) or [Serious Eats](#).

## Snacks

Fresh fruits, cut veggies, nuts, yogurt, cheese, granola bars, etc. Have healthy snack options on hand for when you need a pick-me-up at any time of day or night.

## Household Goods

Since you're on a brainstorming roll, why not list out some household goods you'll want to stock up on before the baby arrives? Tissues, toilet paper, soap, etc. You won't want to run out of any of these during your first days home.