



Nutritious Noshing with the Family

When it comes to whipping up quick and comforting meals, pantry staples are your friend. These are the items you keep stashed in the back of your pantry for off-the-cuff cooking, and they're items that will come in handy when cooking more at home. With a little bit of creativity, you can turn these staple ingredients into complete meals that are comforting, filling and delicious. Pantry staples include:

- Rice
- Quinoa
- Pasta
- Oats
- Beans
- Nuts
- Nut butters
- Dried fruit
- Canned fruits
- Canned vegetables
- Pickled vegetables
- Canned fish
- Stock and broth
- Heart-healthy cooking oils
- Spices and herbs

Visit ahealthiermichigan.org for a variety of recipes you can make with things you may already have in your pantry, including Apple Pie Overnight Oats, Slow Cooker Mediterranean Chili, Red Bean and Quinoa Salad, and Wild Rice Mushroom Bake.

Make it easier for you and your family to eat healthily with batch cooking and meal planning. This can help you save money, and meet your nutrition goals. Some batch meal ideas include soups, stews, muffins, sauces, smoothies, taco meat and hard boiled eggs. Here are some tips:

- Pick a day to plan, shop and prep.
- Keep a well-stocked pantry of staples.
- Take inventory before you shop.
- Save your recipes in one convenient place.
- Use a meal planning template.
- Consider themed nights.
- Plan for future weeks.
- Check sale ads and coupons.
- Make a list and stick to it.



You can make meal prep a family affair by including the whole family. There's no better way to spark your child's interest in healthy eating than to get them involved in the kitchen. Children of all ages can be involved:

- 2 to 5 years old: Stir, pour and wash.
- 6 to 8 years old: Use simple kitchen tools, blunt knives and measuring cups.
- 9 to 12 years old: Make basic recipes.
- 13 to 18 years old: Cook meals for the entire family.

Sources: ahealthiermichigan.org, healthine.com*, eatright.org*

*Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network don't own or control these websites.