

## prep ahead cooking tips

### Multiple Sclerosis

Good nutrition is an important part of managing MS. However, cooking or preparing a meal can seem overwhelming when energy levels are low or you're in pain. Below are ideas for preparing food to fit within your lifestyle and nourish the body to feel it's best.

#### PLANNING & SHOPPING

##### Take It Slow

- Prep food ahead of time only on days when energy levels are high, this prevents added fatigue.
- Choose one food group to prepare per cooking session: grain, protein, or vegetable.
- Make extra of a meal and freeze into individual servings for use when energy is low.
- Consider preparing one or a few staple items for the week if you're not feeling well, such as salad, fruit, hard-boiled eggs, or a grain option.
- Ask a trusted friend or family member to help prepare food items.
- Use kitchen tools such as a slow cooker, can opener, or food processor to help minimize the strain of cooking.

##### Plan Ahead

- Organize meal or snack ideas into one central location for easy, healthy, meal planning.
- Save grocery lists and meal plans for convenient planning and shopping.
- Save time and energy by purchasing groceries online.
- Try a home delivery service or a pick-up service at your local grocery store.

#### PREPARING INGREDIENTS

##### Grains

- Use quick-cooking grains (quinoa, brown rice, oats)
- Make a batch of overnight oatmeal to have an easy grab-and-go breakfast each morning

##### Vegetables

- Purchase bagged, pre-washed lettuce to easily prepare salads
- Roast a batch of hearty vegetables to have as a side dish throughout the week
- Purchase pre-diced, sliced, or spiraled vegetables for cooking convenience
- Purchase frozen or canned vegetables

##### Proteins

- Typically, proteins (such as chicken, beef, turkey, or pork) take the longest to prepare
- Prepare on a day when you have more energy and try to make extra and freeze
- Date and label freezer bags of single servings of protein foods
- Eggs are quick-cooking
- Shrimp and fish are quick-cooking
- Purchase canned or vacuum-sealed legumes

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Safe Storage Tips	
<b>Refrigerator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1-2 Days: Cooked Ground Beef or Ground Poultry</li><li>• 3-4 Days: Cooked Whole Meat, Fish, Poultry, Soups, and Stews</li><li>• 5 Days: Beans and Hummus</li><li>• 1 Week: Hard-Boiled Eggs</li><li>• 2 Weeks: Soft Cheese, Opened</li><li>• 5-6 Weeks: Hard Cheese, Opened</li></ul>
<b>Freezer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2-3 Months: Soups, Stews, Cooked Beans</li><li>• 3-6 Months: Cooked Ground Meat and Cooked Ground Poultry</li><li>• 6-8 Months: Berries, Chopped Fruit (bananas, apples, pear, plums, mango) and Frozen Vegetables</li></ul>