

prep ahead cooking tips

Lupus

Good nutrition is an important part of managing lupus. 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 your body to feel its best.

PLANNING & SHOPPING

Take It Slow

- Prep food ahead of time only on days when energy levels are high
- 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, steamer, microwave, 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 pickup service at your local grocery store.
- If you need more assistance, there are many home-delivery services available that will deliver prepped ingredients for home cooked meals.

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
- Purchase pre-cooked, frozen grains, including brown rice, quinoa, or farro

Vegetables

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

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 beans

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Food safety can also be a concern for those with an autoimmune disease taking immunosuppressant drugs. For proper food safety remember the following:

FOOD SAFETY

Proper Food Preparation

- Wash your hands, cooking tools and surfaces often.
- Separate raw meats and poultry from other foods. Don't use the same knives or cutting boards to prep foods unless they have been washed in hot, soapy water first.
- Cook foods to a safe internal temperature. See box for proper cooking temperatures.
- Refrigerate foods promptly.

Safe Cooking Temperatures

- Poultry - 165° F
- Ground Meats (beef, veal, pork, lamb) - 160° F
- Pork Roasts and Chops - 145° F (rest for at least three minutes before carving or consuming)
- Beef, Veal, Lamb Cuts - 145° F (rest for at least three minutes before carving or consuming)

Safe Storage Tips

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