Healthy Meal Exchange Group

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Here's the quick version for starting your own Healthy Meal Exchange Group:

- 1. Invite health-minded friends to join a group of 3 or 4 people for a monthly healthy meal exchange.
- 2. Pick a date to swap meals.
- 3. Select a homemade, tasty, and healthy meal to batch cook.
- 4. Use the <u>Healthy Plate Model</u> to balance your meal.
- 5. Follow safe and clean food handling practices.
- 6. Batch cook 16 portions (4-person group) or 15 portions (3-person group).
- 7. Pick matching food containers. Re-useable glass containers are best.
- 8. Label your meals with the recipe name and date prepared.
- 9. Transport your food safely in a cooler.
- 10. Swap your healthy meals with your group and enjoy!









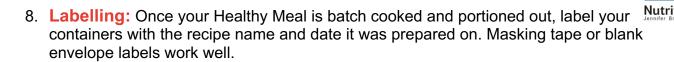




Healthy Meal Exchange Rules



- 1. **Find Health-Minded Friends:** Arrange yourself into a group of 4 (ideal) or group of 3, with similar interests in healthy eating. Limit food restrictions to no more than one request per group (e.g. gluten-free, dairy-free, vegetarian, not spicy, etc.).
 - a. **Groups of 4:** You will be batch cooking 16 portions of a single healthy meal, for a 4-4-4-4 exchange.
 - b. **Groups of 3:** You will be batch cooking 15 portions of a single healthy meal, for a 5-5-5 exchange.
- 2. **Food Exchange Date:** Select a date, time, and location where your Healthy Meal Exchange group will meet up for a food swap. Ideally arrange to meet up 1x/month, but you can exchange food more or less frequently to suit your schedule.
- 3. **Food Quality:** All meals should be homemade with real, wholesome food. Bring your "A game", or at least try your best to select a meal that is healthy, and is also flavourful, nourishing, and delicious to eat.
- 4. **Balanced Meals:** Your meal should include some lean protein, some form of unprocessed high quality carbohydrate (e.g. brown rice, quinoa, sweet potato, squash, wild rice, etc.) and where appropriate, freezer-stable vegetables snuck into your recipe. When eating your meal, try following the Healthy Plate Model with ½ a plate of veggies, ¼ plate of lean protein, and ¼ plate of high quality carbohydrates, adding a salad or extra veggies to the side of your reheated healthy meal whenever possible for extra goodness.
- 5. **Cleanliness:** Cook with safe and clean food handling practices, washing your hands and the ingredients appropriately, and avoiding cross-contamination of food allergens.
- 6. **Quantity:** Batch cook enough food to fill all of your single-serving containers (16 portions in total if in a 4-person group, 15 portions in total if in a 3-person group).
- 7. **Storage Containers:** Container selection should be agreed upon by the group members in advance so everyone uses the same serving size.
 - a. **Short-Term:** If doing a one-time exchange, rectangular (recyclable) take-out containers are acceptable (<u>example 1</u>, <u>example 2</u>, <u>example 3</u>). Try to avoid reheating your meal in a plastic container, if possible.
 - b. **Long-Term:** If this is going to be a long-term commitment, as a group, invest in reusable glass containers that are oven, microwave, and dishwasher safe to save the environmental from unnecessary waste and reduce costs. Our Healthy Meal Exchange group went with <u>3 cup Pyrex</u> rectangular glass containers (64 containers in total, 16 per person, ordered online).



- 9. **Transportation of Food:** Bring a cooler or insulated freezer bag to transport your meals to and from your meeting spot.
- 10. Swap: Exchange your Healthy Meals with your friends, and enjoy a variety of nutritious options that are quick and easy to reheat on busy days. At your swap, feel free to bring a photocopy of your recipe to share with each group member.
 - a. **Groups of 4:** Each person will keep 4 containers from each of the 4 recipes prepared (16 meals in total per person).
 - b. **Groups of 3:** Each person will keep 5 containers from each of the 3 recipes prepared (15 meals in total per person).



Enjoy!

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