

Section 5 - Cooking and Eating Healthy

Cooking and eating are essential life skills that every adult needs to have in order to live independently. You don't need to be a chef, but you should have some basic cooking skills. Cooking should be fun, not overwhelming or stressful. Every kitchen needs to be equipped with certain items. You don't need the fanciest or most expensive things, but you do need some basic items. Keep in mind that with whatever you purchase, you'll probably need to pick it up, move it, and clean it. A large mix master mixer is very heavy, so think before you buy. Some basic kitchen items include:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pots & Pans | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking Utensils |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Measuring Cups | <input type="checkbox"/> Measuring Spoons |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cutting Board | <input type="checkbox"/> Plates & Bowls |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baking Pans | <input type="checkbox"/> Peeler |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixing Bowl(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Spoons & Forks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixing Spoons | <input type="checkbox"/> Can opener |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Storage Containers | <input type="checkbox"/> Knives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colander | <input type="checkbox"/> Baking Dishes |

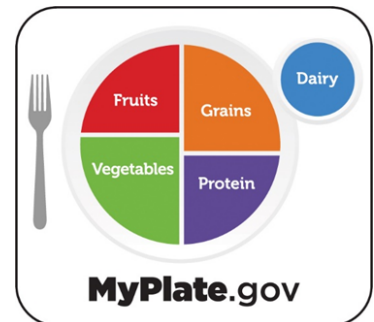


There may be other items you would like to have, but the above are basics.

Healthy Meals

Eating healthy is a life-long process that requires a lot of discipline. It's especially important for people with disabilities because your disability can play a big role in your ability to stay well. Therefore, you want to provide your body with proper nutrition. The reality is that many people with a disability are also overweight.

The United States Department of Agriculture offers some great resources on their MyPlate Plan website at myplate.gov. You can even get customized plans to maintain a healthy weight. They recommend the following:



Fruits – Focus on whole fruits. Any fruit or 100% fruit juice counts as part of the Fruit Group. Fruits may be fresh, frozen, canned, or dried/dehydrated, and may be whole, cut up, pureed, or cooked. At least half of the recommended amount of fruits should come from whole fruit rather than juice.

Vegetables – Any vegetable or 100% vegetable juice counts as part of the Vegetable Group. Vegetables may be raw or cooked; fresh, frozen, canned, or dried/dehydrated; and may be whole, cut-up, or mashed.

Grains – Any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley, or another cereal grain is a grain product. This includes bread, pasta, breakfast cereals, grits, tortillas, popcorn, rice, and oatmeal. Grains are divided into 2 subgroups: whole grains and refined grains. You will need to check the ingredient labels on food to know which ones are whole grain. Make half of your grains whole grains.

Proteins – All foods made from seafood, beef, pork, chicken, turkey, lamb and eggs are protein. Certain beans, peas, lentils, nuts, seeds and soy products are also part of the protein group. Eat a variety of protein and keep your beef, pork and chicken at 93% lean.

Dairy – All milk, yogurt, cheese, lactose-free milk, fortified soy milk and yogurt are dairy foods. It does not include foods made from milk that have little calcium and high-fat content, such as cream cheese, sour cream, cream, and butter. It's best to use low-fat or fat-free dairy milk or yogurt.

Other Tips on Healthy Eating – Limit added sugar, saturated fats, and sodium (salt).

Before you can cook, you must first purchase food. Going to the grocery store can be overwhelming for some people. Some stores are really big and have lots of choices. You can easily get distracted with items you didn't intend to buy, but suddenly ended up in your basket – well, because it looked too tempting to pass up. This can be budget busters and you really need to stay focused while grocery shopping. It's best to make a list of what you need; this will help you stay focused while shopping. You can order groceries online and have them delivered, too. Just be aware they usually mark up the groceries to cost a little bit more to cover the cost of delivery.

Many young people decide the solution for grocery shopping and cooking is to just get take-out food, have a pizza delivered, or go out to a restaurant and eat. Chances are you'll be on a tight budget and doing this will be a treat and require you to save a little money. Most people cannot afford to eat out every day. You won't be able to afford to do this, either. In addition to the cost of the meal, you have to pay taxes, tips, and sometimes delivery fees.

Finally, many individuals live on a very tight budget and may experience food insecurity. This is especially true for individuals with disabilities who are on a fixed income. Sometimes it's due to lack of income, but other times it's due to making poor budget choices. In addition to Louisiana SNAP benefits (food stamps), we have many food banks and pantries in communities that could help out when needed.

Resources	
My Plate by U.S. Department of Agriculture	http://www.myplate.gov/
The New Nutrition Facts Label by U.S. Food & Drug Administration	https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-education-resources-materials/new-nutrition-facts-label
New Era of Smarter Food Safety	https://www.fda.gov/food/new-era-smarter-food-safety
Louisiana SNAP Website	http://www.dcfsls.la.gov/page/93
Why Hunger Food Book & Pantry Search	http://www.whyhunger.org/find-food/

Checklist

Independent Living Skills	I Can Do This	I Need to Practice	I'm Going To Start	I Will Always Need Support	This doesn't apply to me	Notes
KITCHEN KNOWLEDGE						
<input type="checkbox"/> I know the name and purpose of each appliance in the kitchen						
<input type="checkbox"/> I know the name and use of each cooking utensil						
<input type="checkbox"/> I am able to use a stove safely						
<input type="checkbox"/> I am able to use a microwave						
<input type="checkbox"/> I know what not to put in a microwave						
<input type="checkbox"/> I am able to use commonly found small appliances like a can opener, toaster, toaster oven, coffee maker, and mixer						
<input type="checkbox"/> I know what pots can go on the stove						
<input type="checkbox"/> I know what pots, pans, and bakeware can go into the oven						
<input type="checkbox"/> I have a specialized diet and know how to follow it						
<input type="checkbox"/> I know my food allergies						
FOOD PREP SKILLS						
<input type="checkbox"/> I wash my hand before preparing food						
<input type="checkbox"/> I can wash fruits and veggies before eating or using them						
<input type="checkbox"/> I can measure out food with measuring cups, spoons and scales						
<input type="checkbox"/> I know measurement conversions or how to find them						
<input type="checkbox"/> I can use a peeler						

Independent Living Skills	I Can Do This	I Need to Practice	I'm Going To Start	I Will Always Need Support	This doesn't apply to me	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> I can use a sharp knife safely						
<input type="checkbox"/> I can follow recipe directions						
<input type="checkbox"/> I can read and follow directions on food packages						
<input type="checkbox"/> I know if certain foods should be served hot or cold						
<input type="checkbox"/> I know how to check expiration dates on foods						
<input type="checkbox"/> I can recognize foods that are spoiled						
COOKING SKILLS						
<input type="checkbox"/> I know cooking terminology like al dente, bake, beat, boil, fillet, fry, sauté, and steam						
<input type="checkbox"/> I know fruits						
<input type="checkbox"/> I know vegetables						
<input type="checkbox"/> I know grains						
<input type="checkbox"/> I know proteins						
<input type="checkbox"/> I know dairy items						
<input type="checkbox"/> I know fats						
<input type="checkbox"/> I understand what makes up a healthy meal						
<input type="checkbox"/> I have cooked breakfast						
<input type="checkbox"/> I have cooked lunch						
<input type="checkbox"/> I have cooked dinner						
GROCERY SKILLS						
<input type="checkbox"/> I can plan healthy meals						
<input type="checkbox"/> I can make a weekly menu for meals						

Independent Living Skills	I Can Do This	I Need to Practice	I'm Going To Start	I Will Always Need Support	This doesn't apply to me	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> I can make a grocery list from a weekly menu						
<input type="checkbox"/> I can create a menu to fit my budget						
<input type="checkbox"/> I can check off items from my grocery list while shopping						
<input type="checkbox"/> I am able to maneuver a grocery cart around the store						
<input type="checkbox"/> I can make price comparisons for the best deals						
<input type="checkbox"/> I know how to read labels						
<input type="checkbox"/> I know the difference between healthy and unhealthy foods						
<input type="checkbox"/> I have a plan if the store is out of something I need						
<input type="checkbox"/> I understand perishable foods						
<input type="checkbox"/> I can cut out coupons						
<input type="checkbox"/> I know how to use coupons						
<input type="checkbox"/> I can pay the cashier						
ENTERTAINING GUEST						
<input type="checkbox"/> I can create a menu appropriate for the event						
<input type="checkbox"/> I can adjust a recipe size for the number of guests						
<input type="checkbox"/> I can ask to borrow additional dishes and utensils I might need						
<input type="checkbox"/> I know the proper way to greet guests						
<input type="checkbox"/> I know to offer guests a drink						
<input type="checkbox"/> I am able to set a table						
<input type="checkbox"/> I know to thank guests for coming over						

Independent Living Skills	I Can Do This	I Need to Practice	I'm Going To Start	I Will Always Need Support	This doesn't apply to me	Notes
EATING OUT						
<input type="checkbox"/> I understand I can only eat out if my food budget allows for it						
<input type="checkbox"/> I can order food from a menu						
<input type="checkbox"/> I can ask for an accessible menu or help if I need it						
<input type="checkbox"/> I can use appropriate table manners in a sit-down restaurant						
<input type="checkbox"/> I know how to ask for a "to-go" container for leftovers						
<input type="checkbox"/> I understand how to tip food servers						
<input type="checkbox"/> I know how to pay server or cashier						
FOOD INSECURITY						
<input type="checkbox"/> I know how to apply for SNAP benefits						
<input type="checkbox"/> I can make a list of food pantries that I can get to						
<input type="checkbox"/> I know to call a family member or friend if I'm hungry and can't locate food						