

# Getting Started with Menu Planning

Your work schedule, culture, travel, dietary restrictions, or preferences will influence your meal schedule. Generally, a daily schedule for eating includes:

- Breakfast: First meal after waking up
- Lunch: 3-4 hours later
- Dinner: 4-5 hours later
- Snacks: Smaller amounts of food between meals (optional)



## Goals for all meals & snacks

- Get enough energy and nutrients.
- Choose foods from the main food groups.
- Meet your daily goals for all food groups (on most days).
- Include tasty food.
- Avoid spikes or drops in blood sugar that can trigger overeating.

Every meal does not have to include every food group.

## Do I have to eat breakfast?

Breakfast is an important meal that you should not skip. Your body needs energy after a long break in eating. Breakfast kick-starts your metabolism and helps to burn energy during the day. Eating breakfast also helps improve your memory and focus and may lower your risk for heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and obesity.