

# Mealtime Minutes

Food–Mood

Parents report that preparing meals is stressful and feels like being in a “pressure cooker.” The USDA reports that working women spend the most time shopping and preparing meals. Women with children dedicate the most time to cooking. Planning ahead can reduce feelings of stress and fatigue.

## TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Get everyone involved. Ask for favorite meal ideas for the week.
- Make a meal plan for the week. Dedicate one day a week to make your list. Choose a day or evening that is not heavily scheduled with other events.
- Prepare meals that are “double hitters.” Cook extra so there are leftovers that be used in another meal the next night.
- Take stock of your pantry every week before you go shopping. Reduce the times you need to go to the store for that one forgotten item.
- Make one night a week a special (low fuss) meal. It could be a build-your-own-pizza night or soup and sandwiches. Everyone will look forward to it, and the cook is off the hook.
- Cook with others. Invite friends over for a cooking club. Cook several meals together that can go in the freezer for those nights you just don’t have the time or energy to cook.

