

## Meal Plan Basics (by Christy Bahan, RD LD)

**Q:** Where does the meal plan come from that the participants follow?

**A:** The meal plan was created based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans:

<http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/chapter-1/key-recommendations/>

It *Encourages*:

- Eating a variety of vegetables (without butter or cream sauces)
- Eating a variety of fruits, particularly whole fruits (not juices)
- Making at least half of your grains whole grains
- Choosing low-fat or fat-free dairy foods (milk, cheese, yogurt)
- Choosing lean sources of protein
- Incorporating healthy fats

It *Limits*:

- Saturated & Trans fats
- Added Sugars
- Sodium

Rick & Tina refer to the plan as a Nutrition “boot camp”, which means they require participants to eat **whole foods** (minimally processed) & not **food “products”** (think packages with long ingredient lists). The two calorie levels listed are a starting point. The idea is to provide enough nutrition to power through workouts while providing a calorie deficit. Cutting calories too low will usually backfire & put your body into starvation mode. The two meal plans provide guidance on how many servings to consume from each food group, along with an average amount of calories provided by each food group. This average number is a great way to become more *intuitive* about your eating habits. The meal plan cards in the Nutrition Packet go on to explain what foods are in each food group & what a standard serving size is. *These will be discussed in more detail next week.*

While all participants are given a calorie target, it’s not just about calories; it’s about choosing foods that are considered “nutrient dense”; which means, foods with a lot of nutrients without a lot of calories. All participants are required to log their food into My Fitness Pal. If it’s not just about calories, why do they have to do this?

### Benefits of a Food Journal:

- *Awareness:* Most people overestimate what & how much they eat & drink.
- *Education:* Looking back can help one see trends & where to improve (fiber or sodium).
- *Mindfulness:* Most people will stop & think about what they are going to eat before they actually do.
- *Accountability:* It will help you stay on track with your meal plan & your goals.

*Next week’s topic* is My Plate Guidelines. Until then, Blue team Dietitian, Bev Moellering offers some tips for building meals from the meal plan card: (see next page)

# Back to Basics

By Bev Moellering

## Meal Timing

- Eat a substantial breakfast within 1 hour of waking up.
- Stop eating at least 2 hours before bed.
- Eat every 4-6 hours, which means three balanced meals and one snack.

## Meal Ingredients

- 1 serving of lean protein
  - 3-4 ounces of: fish, chicken, turkey, lean pork or beef
- 2 servings of non-starchy vegetables
  - ½ cup cooked or 1 cup raw equals 1 serving
- 1 serving of high fiber carbohydrates
  - ½ cup cooked beans or brown rice
  - ½ small sweet potato
  - 1 piece of fruit
- 1 serving of healthy fat
  - 1 teaspoon olive oil, 10 nuts, 1 tablespoon nut butter equals 1 serving

## The Bowl

- Start with brown rice, quinoa or legumes as base
- Add stir-fried, steamed, roasted or sautéed veggies
- Add protein
- Top with seasoning

## The Soup

- Start with low sodium chicken or veggie broth
- Add lentils, legumes, brown rice or quinoa
- Add non starchy veggies
- Add chopped protein
- Serve with side salad with oil and lemon juice

## The Wrap

- Start with whole grain wrap, romaine or butter leaf lettuce leaves
- Add protein
- Chopped non starchy veggies and leafy greens
- Add healthy fat like chopped nuts or avocado

## The Salad

- Start with dark green leafies
- Add chopped non starchy veggies
- Throw in a little high fiber carb like legumes, berries, or apple
- Add protein
- Dress and season