Cooking and Meal Planning
The 3 P’s – Planning, Purchasing, and Preparing

Planning –
*Establish a budget.
  -Think about how much money you have to spend on food. Each person’s budget will be different based on their situation and income.
  -Remember to include meals that you eat out in your food budget.
  -Make sure to budget for non-food items such as dish soap, toilet paper, paper towels, and laundry soap.

*Plan meals and snacks for the week or month based on your established budget.
  -Check your cupboards, refrigerator, and freezer to see what you already have on hand and can be used in your meal plan.
  -Remember to use MyPlate to make sure you have a nutritious balance.
  -Consider the use of leftovers when planning your meals.

*Find quick and easy recipes online. Sources for recipes include:
  -MyPlate Kitchen – https://www.choosemyplate.gov/myplatekitchen
  -Food Hero – https://www.foodhero.org/recipes/healthy-recipes

*Use your meal plan to develop your grocery store list.
  -Again, check your cupboards, refrigerator, and freezer to avoid purchasing items you already have on hand.

Purchasing –
*Buy groceries when you are not hungry and when you are not rushed.
*Stick to your grocery list and stay out of aisles that do not contain items on your list.
*Buy store brands, if cheaper.
*Find and compare unit prices listed on shelves to get the best price.
*Choose fresh fruits and vegetables in season; buy canned vegetables with less salt.
*Use nutrition facts labels to help you choose healthier options.
*Pre-cut fruits and vegetables, individuals cups of yogurt, and instant rice and hot cereal are convenient, but usually cost more than those that require a bit more preparation time.

Preparing –
*Some meal items can be prepared in advance; pre-cook on days when you have more time.
*Try a few meatless meals (example: substituting beans for meat) to save money.
*Consider ways to incorporate leftovers into additional meals.
*Remember food safety!

Chelsea Richmond, Extension Agent, Nutrition, Food Safety, and Health
Frontier Extension District
411 S. Oak, Garnett, KS 66032
crichmon@ksu.edu; 785.448.6826