

Quick and easy menus for young adult survivors

Eating healthy as a young adult can be difficult. Busy schedules, tight budgets, and the difficulty of cooking for one are all challenges that prevent young adults from making good nutrition choices. However, by careful planning and smart shopping, you can create healthy and balanced meals that are quick to prepare and budget-friendly.

For a meal plan to meet your specific needs and food habits, ask your healthcare team for a referral to a registered dietitian (RD) who works with cancer survivors. If you continue to lose weight or don't have enough energy, an RD can help you develop a healthy meal plan.

QUICK TIPS

- Always eat a healthy breakfast.
 - ▶ A breakfast full of fiber and protein will fuel you with the energy you need to start your day right.
 - ▶ In too much of a rush to make a healthy breakfast before leaving the house? Try preparing something the night before so that you have no excuse to skip the most important meal of the day.
- Snack smart.
 - ▶ Use snacks as a time to increase your fruit and vegetable intake.
 - ▶ Add a healthy form of protein and fiber to your snacks to help hold you over to the next meal.
- Stock your kitchen with items that make meal preparation quick and easy.
 - ▶ Purchase a cooked rotisserie chicken and use as a source of healthy protein in several dishes.
 - ▶ Frozen shrimp that is already cooked, peeled, and deveined provides an easy way to enjoy seafood.
 - ▶ Microwavable brown rice is a speedy way to prepare whole grains.
- Plan ways to reuse key ingredients and repurpose leftovers.
 - ▶ For example, use last night's chili to make a quick taco salad by adding lettuce, salsa, and cheese.
- Eating healthy doesn't mean you can't eat out.
 - ▶ Check restaurant websites to look up nutritional information of menu items beforehand. A little research before ordering can help you make healthy meal choices.
- Recruit friends and family to help you achieve your healthy lifestyle goals.
 - ▶ Keep each other accountable by encouraging smart meal choices, suggesting healthier restaurants, and exercising together.
 - ▶ To save money and make cooking at home easier, eat dinner with your family, friends, or roommates.

SHOPPING FOR ONE

- Avoid the excuse not to eat fruits and vegetables due to an empty refrigerator.
 - ▶ Fill your freezer with frozen produce and you will never have to worry about spoilage and waste.
 - ▶ Compared to fresh produce, frozen fruits and vegetables are equal or sometimes even higher in nutrients because they are picked at the peak of ripeness and flash-frozen to lock in their vitamins and nutrients.
 - ▶ Another benefit of frozen produce is the minimal preparation needed. It is already washed and sliced, so all you need to do is defrost.
 - ▶ To decrease the amount of fat and calories, choose frozen vegetables without added sauce or those made with low-fat sauces.
- Buy meat in portions sized for one.
 - ▶ Make use of your butcher and order small amounts of meat, chicken, fish, or seafood.
 - ▶ If your grocery store only sells prepackaged meats, separate the package into meal-sized portions at home and freeze until use.
- Visit the store's deli to purchase smaller portions of lunch meats and sliced cheeses instead of the large prepackaged lunch meats and cheeses.
- If a recipe calls for only a small portion of an ingredient, visit your store's salad bar.
 - ▶ Instead of purchasing a full jar of olives or a whole head of cabbage, select just what you need at the salad bar.
- Scale down in the produce section when items are sold by the pound. Take two or three bananas from a larger bunch, remove a few tomatoes off the vine, or divide a large bag of grapes in half.
- If a gallon of milk always seems to go bad before finishing a carton, try purchasing pints of milk instead. Organic milk often has a longer shelf life than regular milk.
- Use the bulk bin section of your grocery store. Instead of purchasing large quantities of items, scoop out only the amount of dry goods you need, like oats, pastas, nuts, dried fruits, and spices.
 - ▶ Instead of paying more for individual snack bags of chips and cookies, save money by purchasing a larger size and then dividing it into small plastic bags at home.

The following meal plans are based on 2,000 calories per day.

Young adult sample menu: day 1

MEAL	SUGGESTED ITEMS	NOTES
BREAKFAST Calories 420	Berry almond smoothie: 1 cup berries 1/2 banana 1 cup Greek yogurt 8 almonds, 2 Tbsp. honey 1/2-1 cup ice	Blend all ingredients together. If using frozen fruit, defrost first for easy blending.
MORNING SNACK Calories 200	1 fruit and nut granola bar	Choose a low-sugar, naturally sweetened bar.
LUNCH Calories 610	1 restaurant grilled chicken sandwich 2 Tbsp. ketchup or mustard 1 cup fruit salad 1 ice cream cone	Choose a whole wheat bun if available. Use ketchup or mustard as a heart-healthy condiment instead of mayo-based sauces and condiments.
AFTERNOON SNACK Calories 180	1 cup carrots 2 Tbsp. hummus 4 crackers	Look for a cracker with whole grains listed as the first ingredient.
DINNER Calories 350	Asian shrimp and rice bowl: 1/2 cup pre cooked, deveined, peeled frozen shrimp, defrosted 1 cup frozen mixed vegetables, defrosted 1 cup microwavable brown rice 3 Tbsp. teriyaki sauce	Defrost first three ingredients, mix with teriyaki sauce, and warm through. Look for a low-sodium, low-sugar teriyaki sauce.
EVENING SNACK Calories 235	1/4 cup trail mix 1/2 cup dried cereal	Trail mix can be bought premade or made yourself by combining your favorite types of dried fruit and nuts. Choose a whole grain, low-sugar cereal.

Young adult sample menu: day 2

MEAL	SUGGESTED ITEMS	NOTES
BREAKFAST Calories 410	Sweet waffle sandwich: 2 whole wheat waffles, toasted 2 Tbsp. natural peanut butter 1/2 banana, sliced	Spread peanut butter on warm waffles for easy spreading. You can also choose to fill sandwich with sliced apples or strawberries.
MORNING SNACK Calories 200	1 medium apple 1 cheese stick 4 crackers, whole grain	Choose a low-fat, part-skim cheese stick.
LUNCH Calories 585	Chicken salad made with 2 Tbsp. plain Greek yogurt 1/4 Tbsp curry powder 1/2 tsp. onion powder 1/2 cup rotisserie chicken, chopped 1/4 cup grapes, halved 1 pita, whole wheat, toasted 1 cup carrots on the side 1/4 cup chocolate-covered almonds for dessert	Mix together yogurt and spices, add chicken and grapes. Fill pita with chicken salad. Purchase a pre-prepared rotisserie chicken for quick preparation of meals.
AFTERNOON SNACK Calories 130	1 cup bell pepper, sliced 3 Tbsp. yogurt-based dressing	Find a creamy, yogurt-based dressing in the refrigerated section of your grocery store's produce department.
DINNER Calories 4665	3/4 cup tortellini, refrigerated 1/2 cup marinara sauce 1 cup broccoli, defrosted 1 Tbsp. parmesan cheese	Warm tortellini, marinara sauce, and broccoli together in the microwave. Top with cheese.
EVENING SNACK Calories 210	3/4 cup nonfat frozen yogurt 1/4 cup fruit 1 Tbsp. sprinkles	When eating at a frozen yogurt store, choose a nonfat flavor, and top with fresh fruit instead of candy and syrups.

Young adult sample menu: day 3

MEAL	SUGGESTED ITEMS	NOTES
BREAKFAST Calories 420	Breakfast sandwich: 1 whole-wheat English muffin, toasted 1 slice Canadian bacon 1 fried egg, cooked with 1 tsp. oil	For a quick breakfast on the go, prepare this the night before and heat in the morning.
MORNING SNACK Calories 160	20-oz. latte, with skim milk & sugar free syrup	By ordering a “skinny” latte at your favorite coffee shop instead of a regular latte, you cut the number of calories and sugar in half.
LUNCH Calories 400	Stuffed broccoli cheese potato: 1 medium potato, microwaved 1/2 cup rotisserie chicken, shredded 1/2 cup frozen broccoli, defrosted 2 oz. shredded cheese, low fat salt and pepper to taste	Cook potato in microwave by pricking it several times with a knife or fork and cook for 7-8 minutes or until soft, turning it over halfway through cooking. Let the potato rest 3 minutes. Slice and fill it with remaining ingredients.
AFTERNOON SNACK Calories 210	1 medium orange 1 oz. baked chips	Baked chips are a smart way to enjoy a salty snack. Air-popped popcorn, whole-wheat pretzels, and whole grain crackers are also smart choices.
DINNER Calories 645	Burrito bowl: 4 oz. chicken 1/2 cup brown rice 1/2 cup black beans 1 oz. shredded cheese 1/2 cup romaine lettuce 1/4 cup fajita veggies 1/4 cup salsa	By ordering a burrito bowl without a tortilla, you save 300 calories and 10 grams of fat.
EVENING SNACK Calories 135	1 cup berries 1/4 cup light Cool Whip	Use fresh berries or buy frozen and defrost before serving. Top with Cool Whip to turn fruit into a delicious treat.