What's for dinner? Do you want to save time and money? Here's a few questions that you might consider before making your dinner plans for tonight:

- Will I prepare a home-cooked meal or order takeout from a restaurant?
- What healthy options can I include?
- How much money do I need to spend?
- How much time do I have to prepare and eat dinner tonight?

Use the following four steps as a guide to help save time and money and make your family meals a breeze to plan.

1. **Keep it simple.** Stock up on foods that you can make and serve in a hurry, such as canned tuna, whole grain bread and pasta, canned or frozen beans, fruit, peanut butter, leafy greens, eggs, and low-fat yogurt.

2. **Make meals with your children.** Spend time together making family meals and get some kitchen help too! This will save you time and your children will learn important skills. Children can help in the kitchen by setting the tablet, washing vegetables, stirring, measuring, and choosing a fruit or vegetable to try.

3. **Prepare food ahead of time.** Cook on the weekends when you have time and freeze the food you plan to eat the following week. Search the Eat Smart website for recipes containing your family's favorite foods.

4. **Shop smart.** Go grocery shopping with your kids and take the time to read the nutrition facts labels, unit prices, and compare store and national brand products to find the best buys. This will stretch your food dollars and keep your family healthy.

http://eatsmarimd.blogspot.com/2014/09/dinner-planning-made-easy.html

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RECIPE SPOTLIGHT: FRUIT SALAD WITH JICAMA

Fruit salad makes the perfect addition to a late-summer barbeque. The sweet, juicy flavors of fresh fruit can be eaten as a side dish, a dessert, and even part of breakfast in the morning. Creating fruit salad in the kitchen is a great way to let kids try new fruits.

Try a tropical fruit salad with jicama, mango, kiwi, papaya, and watermelon. Some of these fruits may not be familiar to your children. Let your child help prepare them in the kitchen and they are more likely to give the new fruits a try. Have your child help wash and mix the fruit together, checking out the different textures and smells.

Fruit Salad with Jicama
Serves: 6

Ingredients:
1 jicama, washed and sliced in thin strips
2 cups watermelon or cantaloupe, cut in cubes
1 mango, washed, peeled and cut in cubes
1 papaya, washed, peeled and seeded, cut in cubes
1 kiwi, washed, peeled and cut in cubes
1/2 lime, juiced
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon chili powder

Directions:
1. Add fruit to large bowl.
2. Sprinkle the lime juice over the fruit.
3. In a small bowl, mix the salt and chili powder. Sprinkle mixture over fruit.
4. Chill in the refrigerator before serving.


VEGETABLE OF THE MONTH: SQUASH!

The weather is getting cooler outside, which means fall is right around the corner. There are many different varieties of squash that you can buy, but some are in season in the fall and winter months. The most popular fall and winter squash are: acorn, butternut, and spaghetti squash. Squash comes in a variety of shapes and colors and is a great source of potassium, fiber, and Vitamin A.

How to select:
• Choose squash with glossy skin that does not have any spots or cuts.
• Whole winter squash can be stored at room temperature for 1-3 months depending on the variety.
• Store cut pieces of squash in a closed container in the refrigerator.

Types of squash:
• **Acorn squash** -- usually shaped like an acorn. To prepare rinse the outside, slice into halves and it can be baked, microwaved, sautéed or steamed. Acorn squash can be filled with different ingredients for added flavor. Try our Apple Stuffed Acorn Squash for a quick and easy side dish!

• **Butternut squash** -- has yellow skin and orange flesh inside. As butternut squash gets ripe, it becomes sweeter. To prepare, rinse the outside, peel off the skin, carefully cut down the middle, and chop into pieces. Butternut squash is usually baked or roasted and great in soups! Try the Butternut Squash Soup recipe below!

• **Spaghetti squash:** is oblong and has an ivory to yellow or orange color. Spaghetti squash when cooked looks like spaghetti! Spaghetti squash can be prepared by rinsing off the spaghetti squash and poke holes on the outside. Spaghetti squash can be cooked in the microwave, baked or steamed. Once they are cooked, cut in half and scoop out the insides. Try this Spaghetti Squash with Tomatoes, Basil and Parmesan recipe. Kids will love that it looks like spaghetti!

There are many ways to enjoy squash. What is your favorite squash recipe?

### Butternut Squash Soup

**Ingredients**

- 1 red onion
- 2 medium butternut squash, chopped (or 2 packages of precut)
- 3-4 celery stalks, with leaves, chopped
- 1 potato, chopped
- 3-4 large carrots, chopped
- 3 cups low-sodium chicken stock
- Sprinkle with black pepper

**Add to taste:**

- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1/4 cup half n half

**Directions:**

1. Cook all of the above ingredients in a slow cooker on low for 8 hours, or high for 4 hours.
2. Once cooked and soft, place in a blender and blend for 2-3 minutes until well blended.
3. Add brown sugar, cinnamon and half n half to taste.
4. Enjoy!


### HELPFUL NUTRITION APPS

Do you use a tablet or smartphone? Chances are you probably have a nutrition or physical activity application "or app" downloaded to use. There are many apps that keep track of calories in food, measure physical activity, and even help locate fresh local foods. Here are just a few apps that might be helpful to you:

**My Fitness Pal** -- A free calorie counter and physical activity tracker. This app allows you to track the foods that you eat, add foods not found within the app and enter the amount of physical activity that you do. It is a great tool to see if you are eating enough fruits and veggies and getting enough physical activity.

**Cooking Matters** -- No Kid Hungry and Share Our Strength created a recipe app! It includes over 90 healthy, budget-friendly recipes developed by chefs for you to try at home. The recipes include pictures of the recipe, cooking tips, nutrition facts and chef's notes on other ways to prepare the recipe. These recipes are also kid-friendly and kid-approved!
**Fresh Food Finder** -- An app to help you find the nearest farmers' market and locally-grown food in your area. This app provides a map feature to show you where the markets are located. There are also market details including the market website, address of the market, and if WIC/SNAP benefits are accepted at the market.

**Map My Walk** -- A walking app that lets you track how far, how fast, and how long you walked. It also shows you on a map the exact route you walked and how many calories you burned. This app is a great tool to help motivate you to get more physical activity and set new goals.

*Source: http://eatsmartmd.blogspot.com/2014/10/helpful-nutrition-apps.html*

**FALL/WINTER: RAW POULTRY FOOD SAFETY**

Handling raw poultry such as chicken, turkey, quail, duck…in a safe way is important to prevent unintentional foodborne illness. Many of us have heard of *Salmonella* found on raw poultry such as chicken and turkeys, but far less have heard of *Campylobacter* which is also found on raw poultry. *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* are the leading bacterial agents causing foodborne illness. Whether we buy conventional chicken, organic chicken, or fresh-killed chicken, we can find these bacteria on poultry—so what can you do?

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### Food Safety Questions?

**Call the USDA Meat & Poultry Hotline**

If you have a question about meat, poultry, or egg products, call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline toll free at **1-888-MPHotline** (1-888-674-6854). The hotline is open year-round.

Send E-mail questions to **MPHotline.fsis@usda.gov**.

**Ask Karen!**

FSIS’ automated response system can provide food safety information 24/7 and a live chat during hotline hours.

Visit **AskKaren.gov** or **PregunteleaKaren.gov**.

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**CLEAN...**

- Wash hands, kitchen surfaces, cutting boards, and utensils to prevent the spread of viruses and bacteria **before handling** raw poultry and **after handling** raw poultry.

**COOK- Your Raw Poultry**

- All poultry should be cooked to an internal temperature of 165°F.
- The **BEST** thing to do is cook your stuffing/dressing in a different dish and **NOT inside** the poultry cavity.
- Stuffing will also need to reach an internal temperature of 165°F.
- Use a food thermometer and insert it into the thickest part of the poultry while avoiding the bones.

**Professional Chef Tip:** *Even though your Thanksgiving turkey may have a popup thermometer, using a food thermometer ensures that extra level of safety to know your turkey dinner is ready to eat with your loved ones.*

**CHILL-Handling Leftover Poultry**

- Refrigerators should be set to maintain a temperature of 40°F or below.
- Thaw frozen poultry in the refrigerator — not on the countertop.
- After cooking poultry, refrigerate any uneaten poultry within two hours.
- Leftovers will remain safe to eat for two to three days.

**SEPARATE...**

- When food shopping, keep raw poultry in its own plastic bag to prevent poultry juice from coming in contact with fruit, vegetables, and young children. This will decrease the risk of cross-contamination.
- At home, use one cutting board for cutting fruit and vegetables, and a different cutting board for cutting raw meat/poultry/seafood.
- Don’t wash/rinse raw poultry. Washing raw poultry does a poor job of removing surface bacteria.
- Washing is more likely spraying unwanted bacteria around your kitchen contaminating food and objects around your sink.

[link](www.drexel.edu/dontwashyourchicken)
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If you have a disability that requires special assistance for your participation in a program, please contact the Carroll County Extension Office at 410-386-2760; fax 410-876-0132, two (2) weeks prior to the program.

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