

September 2025



## Upcoming Online Classes

We are offering monthly online classes to support your health goals:

- **Healthy Habits for Weight Loss: September 8th**- Learn simple, sustainable strategies to build healthy habits that support lasting weight loss without diet or deprivation.
- **Diabetes Prevention Class: September 15th**- Learn practical steps to lower your risk of diabetes and improve blood sugar balance.

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## 5 Strategies for Back-to-School 2025 Meal Prep That Your Family Will Love

Are you a parent of children who are heading into the back-to-school 2025 season? If so, you might be feeling overwhelmed by all the prep before that first bell rings. One thing I'm really looking forward to this fall is bringing back a simple weeknight routine—think easy, repeatable dinners and smoother lunch packing.

One important way to lighten your load this school season is to fine-tune your meal prep strategy. In this newsletter, we'll explore five strategies for back-to-school meal prep that will save you time and energy. Plus, you'll love that your family is eating well. I hope this helps make things easier for you and keeps everyone happy and healthy during these busy days!

## 1.) Delegate

No matter your children's age, they can help at some level with meal prep and lunch packing. My kiddos especially loved helping me make banana-oat blender muffins and build-your-own snack boxes (cheese, whole-grain crackers, fruit, and veggies).

Kids love to participate in food prep. Whether it's cutting up ingredients (with age-appropriate tools), packing sections of their bento lunch boxes, or stirring muffin batter, giving them some responsibilities makes them more invested—and more likely to eat the meals they helped create!

Kids are also more likely to try new foods—even fruits and vegetables—if they've helped prepare them. I'll never forget the time my child ate roasted Brussels sprouts with a honey-mustard drizzle—I thought it would never happen!



### Ingredients

lb,c g,ml

- 2 bananas, *very ripe [if not over-ripe]*
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 3 Tbs oat milk (or other milk of choice) or milk of choice
- 3 Tbs maple syrup
- 1 cup oats, quick-cook, *gluten-free*
- 1/2 cup tapioca flour
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- cooking spray

### Directions

#### Prep

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. Peel bananas and break into pieces.
3. Spray muffin tins with oil.

#### Make

1. Add bananas, eggs, vanilla, milk, and maple syrup to blender and process until creamy.
2. Add oats and process until just combined.
3. In a bowl, whisk together tapioca flour, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt.
4. Make a well in dry ingredients and pour in liquid from blender.
5. Stir until just combined.
6. Using a small ice cream scoop or two spoons, place batter in muffin tin and bake for about 8-10 minutes [minis] or 12-15 minutes full size.

## 2.) Plan and Prep Ahead

It's hard to make great decisions when we're tired or frazzled—even for a dietitian. Having a Plan A (your ideal) and Plan B (your backup) keeps meals running smoothly, no matter how the day unfolds.

Using a meal plan as a guide can be really helpful. It doesn't mean you must make every recipe, but it jump-starts healthy meals the whole family can enjoy.

Try this:

- Pick three dinners and a few snacks for each week of the month.
- Stick with it until you've built a repertoire of 10 go-to dinners to rotate (this may take 4-6 weeks).
- Favor dinners that make great lunch leftovers: soups, stews, sheet-pan meals, and roasted proteins pair beautifully with fruit, cut veggies, cheese, and whole-grain crackers.

Favorite dinner-to-lunch combos:

- Shredded chicken tacos → next-day taco bowls with salsa and prepared guacamole
- Vegetable chili → thermos chili with cheese and whole-grain crackers
- Beef stew → stew over quick-microwave brown rice
- Chicken or turkey kabobs → kabob wraps with yogurt-lemon sauce
- Broccoli cheddar soup → soup + whole-grain toast wedges

Pro tip: Scale recipes so you plan for leftovers, and pack lunches before you eat dinner to avoid an early-morning scramble.

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## 3.) Batch Your Work

We batch tasks at the office—do the same in the kitchen.

- Smoothie kits: Portion fruit, spinach, and add-ins into freezer bags or cups. In the morning, dump into the blender and add milk or yogurt.
- Veggie grab-and-go: If your child loves crunchy red bell pepper sticks, don't slice a new one nightly. Twice a week, slice several peppers and store in containers or snack bags to streamline lunch packing.
- Prep once, use twice: If two upcoming dinners need chopped onions and celery, chop enough for both and refrigerate the extra for midweek you-will-thank-yourself ease.

## 4.) Use a Template

Reduce your mental load with simple frameworks.

### **Bento lunch box template:**

Left section = whole grain; right = protein; top = veggie; bottom = fruit; lidded cup = dip or healthy fat.

Make a family list of options and let your child “fill the squares.”



### **Dinner theme nights:**

- Taco Tuesday (slow cooker chicken or black beans)
- Breakfast-for-Dinner (eggs or tofu scramble, whole-grain toast, fruit)
- One-Pan Wednesday (sheet-pan chicken sausage, potatoes, and green beans)
- Pizza Friday (whole-grain crust, light cheese, veggie toppings)
- Rotisserie Monday (rotisserie chicken → tacos, quesadillas, or salad bowls)
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### **A few of my family favorite throw-together recipes:**

- Sheet-Pan Chicken Fajitas (chicken strips, peppers, onions; serve with tortillas and salsa)
- Pesto Tortellini & Veggies (frozen cheese tortellini, steamed broccoli, jarred pesto)
- 15-Minute Black Bean & Cheese Burritos (whole-grain tortillas, canned black beans, shredded cheese, salsa; serve with cucumber slices or apple wedges)
- Mini Pita Pizzas (whole wheat pita rounds, pizza sauce, shredded cheese, and kid-friendly toppings; bake until bubbly)

## 5.) Adjust Your Expectations

When circumstances change, so do your patience and bandwidth—and that’s normal. In this back-to-school season, be gentle with yourself. If you have more activities and to-dos, it’s reasonable to simplify and delegate. You don’t have to do everything or cook as you would during slower seasons. Shortcuts (pre-chopped veggies, rotisserie chicken, frozen grains) are tools, not “cheats.”

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## Key Takeaways: Back-to-School 2025

- Change brings stress; give your family time to settle into new routines.
- Plan ahead, and always have a Plan B (freezer meal, breakfast-for-dinner, or rotisserie chicken night).
- Batch smart, delegate tasks, and rely on simple templates to cut decision fatigue.
- Prioritize balanced, realistic meals that keep everyone energized and satisfied—perfection not required.

You’ve got this—and I’m cheering you on for a calm, nourished start to the school year!



## Ask the Dietitian

**Q: How do I make sure my child is getting enough nutrition from their lunchbox?**

A: Think in terms of five key building blocks when packing a school lunch:

1.) **Protein** – supports growth, focus, and steady energy

Examples: turkey slices, chicken, hard-boiled egg, beans, nut/seed butter

2.) **Fruit**– provides natural sweetness, vitamins, and fiber

Examples: apple slices, grapes, berries, mandarin oranges

3.) **Vegetable** – adds crunch, color, and important nutrients

Examples: baby carrots, cucumber slices, bell pepper strips, cherry tomatoes

4.) **Starch/Grain** – fuels busy bodies and brains

Examples: whole grain bread, tortillas, pita, brown rice, whole wheat crackers

5.) **Dairy** – builds strong bones and teeth

Examples: string cheese, yogurt cup, milk carton, cottage cheese

If you can check off each of these five groups, you can feel confident your child's lunchbox is balanced and ready to keep them fueled for the school day.

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## Thank you for reading our Healthy Living newsletter!

We hope you feel inspired to enjoy seasonal foods like berries and join us for our upcoming classes.

Stay tuned for next month's issue, where we'll share new tips, recipes, and strategies for living your healthiest life.

If you have topics you'd like to see featured, email our dietitians at [jessicajantz@clayplattefamily.com](mailto:jessicajantz@clayplattefamily.com) –we'd love to hear from you!



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