

Quick-Fix Prepared Food Meals

Meals that can be on the table in a hurry, using all or mostly purchased prepared foods

The key to making these meals even healthier is choosing quality foods processed in healthy ways. In general, choose prepared food products that are free of trans fats, corn syrups, nitrates and MSG (see pp. 229–232 for more details and a more complete list). Also consider calories, fats, sodium and fiber contents listed on the label. (For more information, see p. 229 as well as chapter two). On several items below, we have highlighted some specifics in choosing a healthier-choice food.

To put a meal together, we recommend:

... choosing one main source of protein. Examples:

- Breaded fish sticks or fillets (choose whole-grain breading; avoid hydrogenated oils and additives like MSG; Natural Sea is our brand of choice)
- Chicken nuggets (choose whole-grain breading; avoid hydrogenated oils and corn syrup)
- Salmon patties (choose as little fillers as possible by comparing the ingredient list and carbohydrates per serving)
- Hot dogs (choose nitrite free and as low sodium and low fat as possible)
- Ham and other deli meats (choose nitrite free and as low sodium as possible)
- Rotisserie chicken (avoid MSG and corn syrup)
- Grain and veggie patties/nuggets (choose whole grains)
- Bean/lentil loaf (Morningstar Farms is our brand choice)

... choosing up to one source of starch:

- Frozen starchy veggies such as whole kernel corn, peas, hash browns, tater tots (choose brands with lowest added salt and sugars; avoid hydrogenated oils)
- Whole-grain pastas (p. 137)
- Blue corn chips (aim for as low sodium as possible; two of our favorite brands, Garden of Eatin' and Bearitos, contain 60 mg. of sodium per 1 ounce serving)
- Whole-grain breads/rolls/buns/tortillas (p. 191)

... choosing one or more sources of other fruits and vegetables:

- Bagged lettuce, baby carrots, carrot chips, etc.
- Chopped/shredded veggies from deli
- Cut-up fresh fruit from deli
- Frozen veggies, such as broccoli, green beans, mixed bags (choose lowest sodium added as possible)
- Fresh fruit
- Unsweetened frozen fruit (choose those without corn syrup or other added sugars)
- Unsweetened applesauce (choose brands without corn syrup and no added sugars or other ingredients; our brand of choice is Santa Cruz — so sweet, no sugar is needed!)