Nourishing Convenience Foods

Convenience foods are increasingly available in supermarkets today. They can be useful to have on hand if you are too tired to cook or prefer not to cook for only one person. The following are some suggestions:

Freezer meals
- There are a large variety of pre-made frozen meals available in supermarkets. Choose options that include meat/meat alternatives, carbohydrate (e.g. potato/pasta/rice) and some vegetables
- Frozen ready-to-cook meat patties/chicken/fish can be a simple option for the protein portion of your meal
- Take advantage of specials, especially if the food items can be stored safely for use later on (e.g. bulk meat for the freezer, frozen meals)
- Frozen vegetables make an easy addition to any meal and are comparable in nutrients to fresh vegetables purchased from the supermarket. These can be purchased in steam fresh bags, or for a cheaper option just buy a larger bag and cook individual portions.

Soups
- A wide variety of tinned soups are now available – try to choose options with meat or legumes. Adding cream, sour cream or milk powder can also be a good way to boost the protein and energy content.
- For a cheaper option simply cook your own soup in bulk and freeze in individual portions to be reheated in the microwave at a later date.

Canned foods
- Tinned tuna/sardines/salmon in oil can be added to pasta, rice or eaten on crackers or in a sandwich for a high protein meal.
- Baked beans or tinned spaghetti taste great with toast. Simply add a little grated cheese to boost the protein content.
- Tinned legumes (e.g. Three bean mix or kidney beans) can be added to cooked rice for an instant meal or mixed with grated cheese and tomatoes and toasted between tortilla bread for a Mexican style meal. Tip: add sour cream to boost the energy and protein content.
- Tinned meatballs can be added to pasta and topped with grated cheese.
Shelf stable food items

- UHT milks and custards will store for longer periods of time and ensure you’ll never run out of these high energy and protein staples.
- Instant noodles taste great with tinned fish and peas/corn for a quick meal.
- Quick steamer bags of rice and pasta are now readily available but should always be eaten with some protein added (e.g. tinned fish, beans or cheese).

Cook your own

- Many meals can be cooked in larger quantities and then frozen in single portions for consumption at a later date.
- Meals with a higher fluid content tend to freeze well (e.g. Casseroles, curries, pasta sauce and soups).
- Write the name of the meal and the date on the container to easily identify the dish.

Food Safety Tips

- Frozen meals should be used within three months.
- Put meals in small containers to ensure quick freezing.
- Ensure meals are reheated thoroughly before eating.
- Do not re-freeze meals.
- Label your meals with the date and meal type to ensure you use them on time.

Home delivered meals

There are many options for receiving home delivered meals. Please speak with your health care provider if you feel this would be of benefit.

Nutrition supplements

Ready to drink nutritional supplements such as Sustagen and Resource can be a convenient way to obtain good nutrition. Speak with your Dietitian to find out how much you should be having and what type of supplement is most suitable for you.
### Examples of nourishing convenience foods

#### Breakfast
- Breakfast cereal with UHT milk and milk powder
- Fruit toast or crumpets with butter/margarine
- Yoghurt with fruit (tinned, fresh or frozen)
- Yoghurt with muesli and fruit

#### Dessert
- Frozen cakes /cheesecake / pie topped with UHT cream or custard
- Dairy desserts or creamed rice
- Fruit cake with UHT custard/cream
- Ice-cream with nuts or topping
- Ice-cream on a stick

#### Drinks
- UHT plain/flavoured milk
- Long life juice
- Milo/milk flavouring
- Sustagen/Resource supplements

#### Snacks
- Nuts or seeds
- Dried fruit
- Individual serve yoghurts/custards
- Pre-sliced cheese with crackers
- Muesli bar or nut bar
- Peanut butter with biscuits or bread

#### Main meals
- Rice sachet with flavoured tinned tuna/ canned beans and steamed frozen vegetables
- Canned soup with sour/cream and bread roll with margarine/butter
- Frozen pre-prepared meal
- Frozen pizza with a side of pre-washed salad greens in oil based dressing
- Heated pre-made pasta meal with extra cheese on top
- Heated plain pasta sachet with tinned tuna, pesto, sun-dried tomatoes and cheese
- Frozen Yorkshire pudding heated in oven with frozen roast dinner and extra pre-made gravy
- Baked beans/tinned spaghetti or sardines on toast
- Frozen quiche with side of steamed frozen vegetables and added butter/margarine
- Chicken Kiev with frozen vegetables and potato wedges
- Meat pie with wedges and steamed frozen vegetables
- Fish Fingers with frozen vegetables and potato wedges
- Beef lasagne with pre-washed salad in oil based dressing with cheese or nuts
### Suggested meal plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Meal Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BREAKFAST</td>
<td>Porridge with UHT milk and milk powder (see recipe on next page)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Top with dried fruit</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Glass of long life juice</td>
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<tr>
<td>MORNING TEA</td>
<td>Dry crackers with pre-sliced cheese OR Sustagen/Resource supplement drink</td>
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<tr>
<td>LUNCH</td>
<td>2 x toast with margarine/butter</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tinned pumpkin soup topped with cream or sour cream</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFTERNOON TEA</td>
<td>Tinned fruit with custard</td>
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<tr>
<td>DINNER</td>
<td>Frozen chicken kiev and potato wedges cooked in oven</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Steamer bag of frozen vegetables</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Add grated cheese to veges for extra protein</td>
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<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Meals on Wheels</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Note</em>: should be consumed as one meal and dessert/snack</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUPPER</td>
<td>Pre-made rice pudding</td>
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</tbody>
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Suggestions to improve my diet:

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4. 
Convenient Cooking Methods

Microwaving:
Microwaves can be used for defrosting and reheating pre-made frozen meals. They can also be used to steam vegetables, make porridge, scrambled eggs or rice.

Steaming vegetables
1. Chop vegetables into chunks and place in a microwaveable bowl.
2. Add enough water to cover the bottom of the bowl and cover with cling wrap.
3. Microwave on high for 2-5 minutes depending on the type and quantity of vegetables.
Tip: Sprinkle with grated cheese to increase protein and energy content.

Porridge
1. Place desired quantity of quick oats into microwaveable bowl.
2. Cover with milk.
3. For ¼ to ½ cup of oats microwave 1 minute then mix and then microwave for 30 seconds.
Tip: Add 2 heaped teaspoons of milk powder for extra protein and energy.

Scrambled eggs
1. Crack two eggs into a bowl and add two tablespoons of milk (more milk can be added to make dish softer)
2. Whisk together
3. Place in microwave for 1 minute then take out and whisk
4. Microwave for further 30 seconds to 1 minute depending on quantity of milk
Tip: Use cream instead of milk to increase energy content

Slow cooker:
Just pop your ingredients in each morning and have a meal ready to eat at night.

For microwave meal or slow cooker recipe ideas check recipe books or
www.healthyfoodguide.com.au
www.taste.com.au

Additionally speak with your health care provider about arranging home delivered meals.