

Planning Ahead.

Amy: Well, Ken and I are back today and we are going to be talking about the importance of planning ahead. A lot of people don't realize the importance of planning ahead when it comes to trying to lose weight, so we are going to talk to you today a little bit more about that. A lot of people make plans for their money; they budget for the week or the month and they make plans for what they want to do that weekend or that evening after work, or things like that, but a lot of people don't take time to sit down and plan what their menus are going to be for either that day or that week and we are going to talk today about some of the benefits of doing that. What benefits have you found by planning ahead, Ken?

Ken: Well, a couple of things, Amy; I know that I stick to a budget better. If I am planning ahead, I'm less likely to eat out or order a pizza or order Chinese, so that not only saves me calories, but also saves me quite a bit of money.

Amy: Right, good! When it comes to planning your menu, here is a tip that I have that I like to use. I use index cards with a lot of our family's favorite meals and side vegetables on them and so one thing that we will do is sit down on a Sunday and think of what activities we have going on that week; if they were busy a couple of nights during the week and we won't have a lot of time to sit down and eat together and maybe it is a slower week with not a lot going on, but still everyone is usually pretty busy when you work full-time and you don't have a lot of time to come home and start cooking a whole meal. One thing I will do, is sit down on Sunday night and look through my index cards of some different foods that we like, such as grilled cheese and tomato soup, tacos or spaghetti or whatever it might be, one way to save money is to take the grocery ad that you might have gotten in the paper that week and look what is on sale and plan your menu according to that and that can save a lot of money. Another tip is to look at what you have for leftovers in the fridge and use those up. Do you ever make soup?

Ken: I do; I love it, especially in the winter.

Amy: That is way where you can use some of the extra vegetables that you have that might be getting old and you don't want to throw them out and also when you are planning your menu, remember the healthy plate we have talked about and some of our other lessons and you want to make sure you want to have some vegetables planned out to get enough to eat and can still watch calories. You can either plan your menus by the day or by the week, but it really does make a big difference to have that planned out; you can have a meat thawed out and make sure you have those foods at home. On the website, you are going to find a few things; one is a handout entitled, "Planning Ahead" and we talk a lot about tips there and one tip that we like to talk to our Veterans about is when you go to the grocery store, what should you have? Ken, what do you do when you go to the grocery store?

Ken: Well, a lot of times what I do is I make a list but I usually forget the list at home and when I do go, I tend to wander the aisles and I pick foods that I wouldn't normally

pick and then by the time I get home and I lay it all out, I realize I've forgotten about half of the things but if I remember to make a list and then, of course, remember to bring it with me, I'm usually a lot more successful and I don't buy those things like the bag of chips and candy bars and things I don't need.

Amy: Good, the impulse buys. Tips like that and some others are on the handout, "Planning Ahead" and we also have a handout on the website that has a great list of foods you can buy at the grocery store, some good choices in each of the different food groups in each of isles and things to look for and things to watch out for, so make sure you take a look at that and print it out and go ahead and mark off what you need at the grocery store and use that as much as you would like.

Ken: Is there a list of foods that you could have or stock in your pantry that if you didn't have a list or a recipe follow, then you could just use those main ingredients?

Amy: Yes, that is a great idea. We have that actually on the website and in each food group it lists the staples of what you should always make sure that you have, so if you want to do some last minute cooking or look through your cookbook, typically than you will have the things you need at home.

Ken: Okay, thanks. Amy, do you have any menus that we could print off on the website?

Amy: Yes. We put a few menus of a variety of 1500 to 2000 calories that are on the website, so if you have never planned a menu before, take a look at those and pick the meals that you like and plan those out. If you are someone who travels a lot for your job or you are really busy at work, take those things into account and we have had Veterans who travel; they do sales and they are gone all week and we have had some who are very successful in our program and we have had some who aren't very successful and the traits of successful Veterans who are busy and travel all the time is that when they go to a different city, they find a local grocery store and they go buy healthy foods, fruits and vegetables for snacks, and maybe healthy sandwiches. There are a lot of healthy options you can find in the grocery store, but eating out gets a little tougher, so if you can plan ahead and do that, you will save yourself a lot of calories and typically a lot of money.

Exactly, I do a lot of traveling with my job and instead of buying a bag of pretzels or something or pop when there is nothing else, I will buy a Diet Coke or I'll take an apple and an orange and I have got a bag of fruit in the car wherever I do. In fact, I just came back from a trip yesterday and I had oranges, tangerines and apples and everybody in the car ate them, but at least we didn't stop to eat the junk food like we normally would.

Amy: On a side note, when you go out to eat, you can look up restaurants online now where you can look at their menu and find out how many calories are in there and some restaurants, even on their menu, will list how many calories are in each entree or side

dish and so utilize those and it can really make a big difference when you are eating out.

Ken: Amy, I have a couple questions. You talked a lot about food and preparing meals and menus; what about snacks and what about beverages at work, as I tend to drink a lot more pop at work and are there are any suggestions you might have for that?

Amy: That is a great question! I would say water is the most important thing we can do. A lot of us as we age we lose the ability to tell if we are thirsty or if we are hungry, so if you are starting to feel hungry, it could truly be that you are thirsty and if you are someone who drinks a lot of diet soda during the day or coffee or things with caffeine in them, those are very dehydrating and if you are not drinking a lot of water with those, you may be chronically dehydrated and thinking you are hungry a lot more often than you are and maybe you are just thirsty. A trick that we usually have is for every can of a diet soda or a cup of coffee that you drink, drink again that much water to replenish yourself.

Ken: I like that.

Amy: If you are someone who just has to have coffee or just has to have pop, make yourself drink that amount of water before you drink that and that is another way to get that water in.

Ken: Fill up the water and less likely to want the pop.

Amy: Yes, and maybe limit the amount.

Ken: I like that.

Amy: You can talk to your *MOVE!* dietitian too, but typically we recommend at least six to eight cups of water to keep you hydrated and there is a handout called "Water, Drink Up" that is going to be linked to this lesson and there are a lot of benefits of getting enough hydration and enough water that you are going to want to look at, so take a look at that. If you are at work or you're driving on a trip and it is not somewhere where you are going to have a lot of water readily available to you, there are a lot of good water bottles out there now that you can pre-fill and take along and calorie beverages throughout the day, like a diet soda or there are different carbonated waters that are flavored that are sugar free. What are some other ideas?

Ken: A lot of people like the flavored sleeves that they can just pour in their bottled water and those are a good choice. I like the carbonated water, but I don't like the flavored kind, just a lemon or lime.

Amy: So there is a wide variety of different beverages you can choose and just make sure that you are staying adequately hydrated, especially during the winter months and that is really important to do, as it is drier everywhere you go.

Ken, we have talked about four or five or different ways to plan ahead today, so hopefully that has helped a lot of you and on the website you're going to find a worksheet, "Ways To Plan Ahead" and there are five spots where you can fill out some ideas for your own life and how you want to plan ahead and take a look at the handouts that are on there and really just remember that planning ahead is one of the big keys to losing weight and keeping it off and staying healthy.