

## Freezer Meals



### IN THIS ISSUE

Freezer Meals	1
Diabetes Awareness	1
Upcoming Events	1
Quick Chili	2

Freezer meals are becoming more and more popular and for good reason. They can help to ensure a healthy meal even when time is short! Here are some different ways to prepare freezer meals:

#### Cook once for the week (or month if you're feeling ambitious):

Take a day to cook your meals for the week, freeze them and take them out as needed! You'll want to transfer the meal from the freezer to the refrigerator the day before you're planning to eat it.

**Make double batches:** If you don't like to cook all day, this is the method for you. Cook double of whatever you're having for dinner that night. Eat one batch right away and freeze the other batch. This is great for when you're making things like baked ziti, lasagna, chicken or turkey pot pie, casseroles, and meals with a lot of ingredients. This way you already have all the ingredients out, and can save time on preparing a meal that you can reheat later.

**Freeze it in bulk:** If you prepare a lot of dry rice and beans, make multiple bags at a time, separate them into smaller portions (however much your family would eat in a night), and freeze them. Pull these out as needed and you'll always have a side ready to go! This method is also great for shredded chicken and taco meat!

- **How to Freeze:** You can use freezer bags or containers. Bags use less space than containers and if you lay bags flat in the freezer, they will not take up much space! **Tip:** Try to get as much air as possible out of the bag or container before you put it in the freezer.

**Don't cook it yet:** A really easy way to have a healthy, quick dinner is to put all the ingredients you would normally bake in one pan or crock pot into a freezer bag and freeze it. Then, when ready to cook, just dump it into the pan or crock pot! For this method, you'll need some gallon-sized freezer bags to store the uncooked meal in. This will save space in the freezer and make preparing it simple! There are tons of recipes out there that are intended for this method.

- **Thaw and re-heat foods safely!** Be sure to label and date any food that you freeze, so that you know what you have and how long it will keep. You can thaw your freezer meals in the refrigerator the day before re-heating them. Be sure to re-heat any leftovers to 165 degrees. (Tips courtesy of Jami Balmet [keeperofthehome.org](http://keeperofthehome.org))

## Upcoming Events:

### Maintain Don't Gain Holiday Challenge

Nov. 16 - Dec. 31

You are invited to join the 10th annual Holiday Challenge. This FREE seven-week challenge provides participants with tips, tricks, and ideas to help maintain their weight throughout the holiday season.

- To learn more or register visit <https://esmmweighless.com/holiday-challenge-live/>

### Free Diabetes Webinars

Nov. 18 @ 9AM-10AM

Nov. 19 @ 12PM-1PM

Nov. 19 @ 6:30PM-7:30PM

NC Health Smart will teach you how to enjoy the holidays while keeping your diabetes under control.

- Visit [voicesintoaction.org/events](http://voicesintoaction.org/events) for details and registration links.

## Diabetes Awareness

November is American Diabetes Month and this year's theme is Eat Well, America! As the American Diabetes Association® celebrates its 75th anniversary, they are sharing the message that eating well is one of life's greatest pleasures. Enjoying delicious, healthy food helps with diabetes management. This November, look for tips and recipes to learn how easy and joyful healthy eating can be. Here are some ways to get started:

- [Diabetesforecast.org/adm](http://Diabetesforecast.org/adm) and 1-800-DIABETES are the go-to resources offering meal planning, shopping tips, grocery lists, chef's preparation secrets and delicious recipes.

- This year, National Healthy Lunch Day is on Nov.17. Everyone is encouraged to "lunch right with every bite."

- You can share your healthy lunch photos using the hashtag #MyHealthyLunch to create social media buzz!

Eat Well, America! is posting healthy and delicious recipes each week in November including breakfast recipes, snacks, lunches, dinners and special occasion foods. Go to [diabetes.org](http://diabetes.org) to learn all about diabetes, take a risk test and find healthy recipes that are diabetes friendly.

# Quick Chili

Makes 4 servings



## Ingredients:

- 1 cup low-sodium tomato sauce
- 1/2 pound ground beef (or ground turkey)
- 1 can low-sodium kidney beans with liquid (about 15 oz)
- 1 tablespoon dried onion powder (or 1/4 cup chopped onion)
- 1 1/2 tablespoons chili powder

## Instructions:

1. In a large skillet, cook ground beef until browned.
2. Drain off any fat.
3. Stir in kidney beans with liquid, tomato sauce, onion, and chili powder.
4. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 10 minutes. Increase your vegetable intake by adding your favorite veggies! Try mushrooms, spinach or kale, and corn.

Source: USDA recipe finder

<https://www.ncfamilieseatingbetter.org/EFNEP/participants/tips/quick-chili/>

This healthy recipe idea is courtesy of Eat Smart Move More NC.

This recipe and others can be found at:

[www.ncfamilieseatingbetter.org/EFNEP/participants/tips/category/recipes](http://www.ncfamilieseatingbetter.org/EFNEP/participants/tips/category/recipes)

If you are looking for free tools to promote healthy eating and active living for your family, school, church, worksite, or community, visit the website below to get started!

[www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/ProgramsNTools/ProgramsNTools.html](http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/ProgramsNTools/ProgramsNTools.html)

Photo Sources: morguefile.com, dupaldunnpal.org, theheartysoul.com

Our mission is to partner with communities to improve access to healthy, affordable food and safe places to be active.



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