

# Helping Hands

**Helping Hands** is a guidebook for volunteers who provide meals to soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and other such facilities. It offers a practical resource for volunteers who donate prepared foods to community feeding organizations so that they can create healthy and safe meals. The guidebook was created with the budget-minded and busy cook in mind.

## Components of a Healthy Meal

A healthy meal provides important nutrients such as **vitamins, minerals, good fats and protein sources, and fiber.** The guidebook includes simple yet helpful ways to incorporate healthy foods into a menu while cutting out unnecessary fats and sugars. Furthermore, a healthy meal does not need to be expensive or complicated. We have included a variety of recipes that use affordable ingredients. Readers will also find helpful grocery lists and key time- and cost-saving tips.

## Time and Cost Saving Tips

A healthy meal does not need to be expensive or complicated.

- Plan ahead. First determine what is possible for you to do, purchase ingredients, and prepare the food in advance.
- Make extra portions of your regularly planned meals and freeze them for future volunteering.
- Buy meats on sale and freeze for later.
- Choose simple recipes.

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## Food Safety

By following food safety and sanitation standards, volunteers will help to ensure that the food they are providing is safe. Additionally, the guidebook will address **food storage tips** relevant to the needs of agencies receiving prepared, donated foods. Volunteers need to remember that they may be serving individuals with **special health needs** such as diabetes, cancer, or other chronic illnesses.



*“We can’t always fulfill preferences, but we try to come close; we try to provide something appealing while doing our best to keep it healthy.”*

*–Volunteer coordinator*



## Sample Meals & Recipes

The guidebook provides sample meals and their estimated costs, in addition to healthy recipes with complete shopping lists and nutrition facts.

### *Chicken Dinner for 12*

- Baked chicken
- Au gratin potatoes
- Cucumber salad with tomatoes
- Easy fruit salad

*Approximate cost: \$26.00*

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For access to the full-version of *Helping Hands*, please visit [www.ecu.edu/cs-dhs/fammed/index.cfm](http://www.ecu.edu/cs-dhs/fammed/index.cfm).  
For comments and questions, contact Jill Jennings at [jenningsj06@students.ecu.edu](mailto:jenningsj06@students.ecu.edu).

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