

AI Prompt: The Decide Once Planner

A starting prompt for letting AI build your weekly meal pattern around the 2025–2030 Dietary Guidelines

This is the prompt I'd use if I wanted help building a meal pattern from scratch. Copy it, fill in the blanks, and let AI ask follow-up questions. The more honest your context, the more useful the answer. Don't worry about getting the wording perfect — the blanks are what matter.

The new federal guidelines made the priorities simple enough to fit in a prompt. American households must prioritize whole, nutrient-dense foods — protein, dairy, vegetables, fruits, healthy fats, and whole grains — and dramatically reduce highly processed foods. The prompt below bakes that pattern in so the answer comes back already aligned with what the family is trying to do. [Healthline](#)

Why This Prompt Works

Most people ask AI to plan their meals with a single line — "give me a meal plan for the week" — and get back a generic list that fits no one in particular. The prompt below gives AI the constraints it needs to produce something useful. The constraints are the point.

| What this prompt does | What a vague prompt produces |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Anchors the plan in the new dietary guidelines | A plan built on outdated assumptions |

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|---|--|
| Names the family's actual reality | A plan that ignores the kids' ages, the budget, and the schedule |
| Specifies whole-food sources | A plan that quietly defaults to highly processed shortcuts |
| Asks for protein at every meal | A plan that puts cereal at breakfast and pasta at dinner |
| Builds in kid involvement | A plan that assumes one parent does all the cooking |
| Requests a grocery list organized by category | A plan that leaves the shopping logistics for you to figure out |



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Copy and Paste Prompts

Help me build a "decide once" weekly meal pattern for my family, aligned with the 2025–2030 U.S. Dietary Guidelines (the new MAHA-era guidelines that prioritize whole foods and protein at every meal).

Family details:

- Number of adults and ages and approximate weights:
- Number of children and ages:
- Active or athletic kids? [yes/no]
- Any allergies, sensitivities, or dietary considerations:
- Approximate weekly grocery budget:

This season's reality:



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- Working schedule of the parents:
- Bandwidth available for cooking:
- Cooking experience level of the kids:
- Stores or sources I have access to (rancher, farm, co-op, conventional grocery, warehouse club):

Version of the pattern that fits this season:

- Ultra-Simple (busy or hard season — same breakfast daily, same lunch pattern, rotating dinner themes)
- Moderate Variety (steady school-year rhythm — two breakfast options, leftovers for lunch, theme nights for dinner)
- Teaching Mode (calmer evenings, older kids ready to learn — each child owns one night)



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Goals:

- Protein at every meal, around 0.54 to 0.73 grams per pound of body weight per day for adults
- Whole-food sources prioritized — meat, eggs, wild seafood, full-fat dairy, beans, legumes
- Vegetables and fruit at the wide top of the plate, half the plate at most meals
- Full-fat dairy without added sugars
- Healthy fats from whole foods and traditional cooking fats — olive oil, butter, beef tallow, ghee, avocado, nuts, seeds
- No industrial seed oils (soybean, corn, canola, vegetable oil)
- No artificial dyes, artificial preservatives, or artificial



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sweeteners

- Minimize added sugars
- Whole grains in modest portions (two to four servings a day)
- Two or three vegetables chosen for the week and reused across meals

Please:

- 1) Propose a weekly meal theme map (one theme per day, with two or three rotation recipes for each theme)
- 2) Recommend three or four proteins to anchor the week
- 3) Suggest a side rotation — vegetables, fruits, fats, whole grains — that gets reused across the week
- 4) Generate a matching grocery list organized by category



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(proteins, vegetables, fruit, dairy and fats, whole grains,

pantry)

5) Suggest how to assign kids to help based on their ages

6) Recommend a Sunday prep plan that sets up easier weeknights

7) Flag any items I should buy in volume to lower ongoing

weekly cost

8) Estimate roughly what the total grocery cost should run

Keep it practical, budget-aware, and seasonal. Prioritize whole foods. Avoid suggesting highly processed convenience products even when they'd be faster. The goal is capability, predictability, and nourishment — in that order.



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Filling In the Blanks - The prompt is only as useful as what you put into it. A few notes on each section so you can answer with the kind of detail that gets you a real plan instead of a generic one.

| Section | What to put there |
|------------------------|---|
| Family details | The actual ages and weights, not approximations. AI does the protein math better when the numbers are real. |
| This season's reality | The honest version. If one parent is on a deadline and the other is solo most evenings, say so. |
| Version of the pattern | Pick the one that fits the season, not the one you wish fit. Ultra-Simple in a hard season is the right call. |
| Goals | Already written into the prompt; adjust only if you have specific medical or dietary needs to add. |
| Please section | Already written; tells AI exactly what kind of output you want and in what order. |



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Common Follow-Up Prompts

The first plan AI gives you is a draft. The useful answers come from pushing back on it. A few prompts worth keeping ready.

| Follow-up prompt | What it surfaces |
|---|---|
| "Walk through the protein math — does this hit the daily targets for each family member?" | Whether the plan actually delivers on the protein-at-every-meal principle |
| "Which of these meals could be cooked once and stretched across two nights?" | Where the Sunday prep can save weeknight time |
| "What in this plan would my eight-year-old be capable of cooking with supervision?" | Where the teaching opportunities are |



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| | |
|---|---|
| "Which of these recipes secretly relies on highly processed ingredients?" | Whether the plan is actually as whole-food as it claims |
| "What would change if my budget were 20% lower?" | The version of the plan that fits when money is tighter |
| "What would change if I doubled the amount of vegetables?" | What's possible at the upper end of the new pyramid |
| "What's a backup plan for the night I get home late?" | The plan B that prevents takeout from sneaking in |
| "Which of these proteins could I buy in bulk to save money?" | The shift toward buying directly from a rancher or farm |



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When to Run This Prompt

A prompt this rich isn't meant for every Sunday. It's meant for the moments when the system needs to be reset.

| When to run it | Why |
|---|--|
| At the start of a new season | The version needs to change with the bandwidth |
| After a quarterly reflection caught drift | Reset the pattern around what actually worked |
| When a major life shift happens — new baby, new job, new schedule | The old plan won't fit the new reality |
| When the family has been eating mostly highly processed food for a while and wants to reset | A clean rebuild aligned with the new pyramid |



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| When the budget changes meaningfully | The plan needs to flex up or down |
| Once a quarter as a routine reset | Catches drift before it becomes the norm |



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Common Mistakes Worth Naming - A few patterns that quietly sabotage what AI can do for the kitchen.

| Mistake | What to do instead |
|--|--|
| Asking for a meal plan with no constraints | Use the full prompt above; the constraints are what make the answer useful |
| Accepting the first plan without follow-up | Ask the follow-up questions; the second and third versions are where the useful answers live |
| Letting AI default to highly processed shortcuts | Reread the goals section in the prompt; it tells AI to avoid those |
| Not specifying budget | The plan won't account for cost without it |
| Skipping the season's reality | A plan built for an easy season won't survive a hard one |
| Treating the AI's plan as final | It's a starting point; the family decides what stays |



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A Note on the Tool

A meal-planning prompt is a tool, not a replacement for a parent's judgment. The new guidelines were clear about where the responsibility actually sits. "American households must prioritize whole, nutrient-dense foods,". AI can help you build the plan, organize the list, and remember the kids' allergies — but the household is what makes it real. The pattern only works when someone in the family decides it matters and shows up to cook. [Healthline](#)



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