**Principles of Menu Planning**

1. **Variety – some restaurants offer a limited or specialized menu - e.g. steak or tacos or ethnic. You do not expect a variety of foods. Cycle menus in many institutions do not offer choices. A food service operation should offer options so everyone can find appealing foods on the menu.**
2. **Balance – appearance, serving size, and nutrition. Think about how foods will appear on the plate. Three items are attractive (meat, starch, vegetable). Servings sizes – regular, children, seniors.**
3. **Good Nutrition - Institutions have responsibility to provide nutritious, appetizing meals. Hospitals, nursing homes – special diets. Restaurants have less obligation. Many offer good variety. Up to customer to make good choices. Method of food preparation important in maintaining nutritional value.**
4. **Flexibility – adapt to new situations – shortages or overstock of certain food items, new equipment, seasonal products, prices of products. Examples: “Special of the Day”, seasonal salads or other dishes.**
5. **Truthful – food accurately described. Fresh fruit salad should not be made with canned fruit. Homemade items should be made in kitchen not purchased pre-prepared. Pictures should be accurate/realistic.**