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## Snap Kitchen serving quick, healthy meals in Park Ridge



Owen Deignan, director of operations for Snap Kitchen Chicago, stands inside the company's new store at 31 S. Northwest Highway in Park Ridge. (Jennifer Johnson / Pioneer Press)

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The Chicago area's seventh Snap Kitchen store has opened in Park Ridge

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There's more kale than candy these days inside what used to be the Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory in Uptown Park Ridge.

Snap Kitchen, stocked with health-conscious "heat and eat" meals and pressed juices, opened this weekend at 31 S. Northwest Highway.

Part cafeteria, part neighborhood market, Snap Kitchen supplies "fresh, healthy take-away, chef inspired, dietitian approved" meals, according to Owen Deignan, director of operations for Snap Kitchen Chicago, who is involved in the opening of the Park Ridge store.

The meals are prepared fresh off-site and brought to the store, where they are refrigerated, Deignan said. Customers can heat up the meals on-site using a microwave — and eat them in a dining area — or take them home. There are also delivery options and an opportunity to sign up for a 21-day meal plan, where new batches of food are picked up every three days, Deignan said.

Customers can buy foods based on calorie count or their ingredients, which are identified on a label. Labels also indicate if the food is high in carbs, non-dairy, gluten-free, low sodium, "plant powered," vegan or part of the "paleo" diet, which largely consists of fruits, nuts, vegetables and protein, Deignan said.

According to the current menu, meals range from grass-fed lamb lasagna and bison patties to almond crusted salmon, turkey meatloaf and chicken breast. There are also salads, kale snacks, breakfast items and desserts, like a gluten-free brownie, chocolate chip cookies and raw coconut macaroons.

The menu changes seasonally, Deignan said.

Snap Kitchen also sells eight kinds of cold-press juices, from a carrot-ginger elixir to spicy basil lemonade.

Foods are aimed at the health conscious, those with special dietary needs, those who are looking to lose weight or anyone in need of a quick meal that isn't typical fast food. Deignan said.

"We have a chef create the recipes and test them, and then we have a dietitian that works directly with a culinary team. The team looks at the combination of fats, carbs and proteins to accommodate a bunch of dietary needs," he said.

Local food suppliers and organic foods and ingredients are used whenever possible, Deignan said.

According to the Park Ridge Chamber of Commerce, a ribbon cutting will take place at Snap Kitchen on Thursday, Nov. 12 at 4:30 p.m.

This is Snap Kitchen's seventh store in the Chicago area and only the second suburban location, according to Deignan.

Hours are 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., Monday through Thursday; 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Friday; 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday; and 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Sunday.

Snap Kitchen stores are primarily located in Houston, Austin, Dallas and Chicago, according to the company's website.

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