

May 2021

Howdy Colorado County!

Eat Healthy on a Budget

Eating healthy – lots of fruits and veggies, lean protein, whole grains – doesn't have to be more expensive. If you shop smart and plan ahead, you'll be surprised at how much goodness you can haul without breaking the bank. The reality is, many of those ready-made, super-fast, prepackaged foods actually cost MORE than homemade foods. And they tend to have more calories, saturated fat, sodium and added sugars. So drop the excuses because scoring those nutrient-dense, fiber-rich foods your body needs is easier – and cheaper – than you think.

Planning ahead is key to success.

Preparing menus and grocery lists ahead of time can keep you from making impulse food choices, which often aren't healthy. With a little planning, you can make the healthy choice the easy choice.

- **Plan out one or two weeks of healthy meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner.** Take a few minutes over the weekend to go through your favorite healthy recipes and map out your meal plan. Update your go-to list as you come across new recipes, and don't be afraid to try new things!
- **Use a grocery list or meal-planning app with a grocery list feature.** This will help you quickly grab the ingredients you need for your healthy meal plan.
- **If your work week is crazy, cook over the weekend and store pre-portioned meals in the fridge or freezer.** Now this is a real time and money saver! Just thaw and reheat for hassle-free lunches and dinners.
- **Cut up fruits and vegetables and keep them handy in the fridge, or pre-pack individual servings for when you're on the go.** You'll have ready-made healthy snacks and meal ingredients at your fingertips.

Shop smart to save big.

- **Knowing how to navigate** the grocery store can save time and money.
- **Keep an eye out for specials.** Stock up on frozen and canned produce when it's on sale.
- **Use coupons and join store rewards programs.** You'll be more aware of what's on sale and able to work it into your meal planning.
- **Buy fresh fruits and vegetables in season.** For example, blueberries cost less in spring and summer, when they're in season. You'll pay more in the fall and winter when they're shipped from warmer climates.
- **Skip the ready-made foods and individually-packaged snacks.** The convenience may be tempting but it's usually healthier and cheaper to prepare these same foods at home. So aim your cart in another direction.

Buy local – at a farmer's market or store. The produce may be fresher because it wasn't picked before ripening to travel on a truck long-distance to get to you. You'll know where your food is coming from and help your local economy. You can save money by buying in bulk and splitting the cost with friends or family.

Practices makes perfect.

- **Don't give up!** Putting a new healthy routine in place doesn't happen overnight, so don't give up!
- **Make healthy changes one step at a time.** You and your family won't feel blindsided or deprived of all of your favorites if the changes are gradual.

Involve the whole family. Kids can help with meal planning, grocery shopping and even cooking. Let each family member be chef for a day and take charge of a particular meal. Encourage older kids to make a game of reading food labels at the grocery store. Let younger kids pick out new types of fruits and vegetables to try. Get more budget-friendly tips online. The AHA has got your back in the grocery store and the kitchen. Learn how to eat healthy and check out this list of healthy foods under \$1.

Texas A&M AgriLife
Extension Service
Colorado County

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- Apples (raw with skin)
- Bananas
- Baby Carrots
- Canned Beans
- Tomatoes
- Oranges
- Pears

- Yogurt
- Eggs
- Broccoli
- Sweet Potato
- Brown Rice
- Green Peas
- Fat-Free Milk
- Regular Oatmeal
- Spinach
- Frozen Mixed Vegetables

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service. 2011. USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 24.

SNEAKING VEGGIES INTO YOUR MEALS

We all know picky eaters but that's no reason to lose out on key nutrients found in fresh ingredients. Try one of these methods to add food, flavor and nutrition to your next meal.

Get Shredded



Grab a grater and add fine pieces that are hard to detect or pick out.



Get Mushy

Matching textures can help veggies go undetected. Try replacing half of your ground meat with cooked & chopped mushrooms.

Be Smooth



Put that blender to work by smothering out veggies and adding them into the liquid of your meal.
TIP: cooked veggies smooth out the best!



Get Cheesy

Matching colors can be an easy substitute. Use veggies like squash, sweet potatoes and carrots to replace half of your cheese. BONUS: this can cut cost, sodium and fat.

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What's Cooking!

Grape Salsa

Ingredients: Makes 2 cups

2 cups grapes, cut in pieces
½ cups sliced green onion
½ cups diced Anaheim chilies, fresh or canned
2 tablespoons chopped cilantro
2 tablespoons vinegar
¼ teaspoon garlic powder or 1 clove garlic, minced
½ teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon hot sauce

Directions:

Combine all ingredients in medium bowl. Mix well. Let stand at least 1 hour. Drain off excess liquid before serving.

Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Nutritional Information: 8 servings

| | |
|---------------|-------|
| Calories | 38 |
| Fat | .03 g |
| Saturated Fat | 0 g |
| Cholesterol | 0 mg |
| Sodium | 147mg |
| Carbohydrates | 9 g |

Whole grapes are a serious choking hazard for children younger than 4 years old. Cut grapes in half lengthwise or even into quarters.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jashae Horn

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