

Eating Healthy on a Budget

Eating healthy does not have to be expensive. Use these tips to make healthy choices while staying within your budget. Here are some simple tips to help you stretch your food dollars

Create a Grocery Plan

- Before going to the grocery store or ordering your groceries for pick up, get organized. Look in your freezer, cabinets, and refrigerator. See what items you already have and save money by using them.
- Write down the meals you want to make during the week or two. Think about ideas for healthy and low-cost meals based on foods your family enjoys and foods that are good buys.
- Make a grocery list. Try to buy enough for the whole week or two and save yourself a trip to the store.
- Think about your schedule. Choose meals you can make easily on your busiest days. Save recipes that take longer for your days off.

Shop Smart to Fill Your Cart

- If you have freezer space, buy frozen vegetables without added sauces or butter. They are a good for you as fresh and may cost less.
- Use canned and frozen fruits and vegetables. They last longer than fresh and are a quick way to add fruits and vegetables to your meal.
- Buy “in season” fruits and vegetables if you can. They usually cost less and are at their peak flavor. Buy only what you can use before it spoils.
- Learn to read labels. Especially check the Nutrition Facts label to see the amount of fat, sodium and added sugars in the foods and beverages you choose.
- To lower meat costs, buy the family-sized or value pack and freeze what you do not use. Choose lean meats like chicken or turkey. When choosing ground beef, make sure it is lean. 92 percent lean to 8 percent fat is recommended.
- Do not forget about eggs! They are a great low-cost option that is easy to prepare.
- Always check the sell by date to make sure you are buying the freshest dairy products.
- Choose rice and pasta for budget friendly grain options.
- Drink water instead of buying sugary drinks. Tap water is easy on the wallet and has zero calories.
- Choose the checkout lane without the candy, especially if you have kids with you.

Prepare Healthy Meals

Use these timesaver tips to cut your time in the kitchen. By taking the stress and hassle out of cooking, you will have more time to enjoy it and to spend with your family.

- Organize your kitchen. Keep frequently used items such as cooking oils/sprays, spatulas, cutting boards and spices within easy reach.
- Clear the clutter. Before you begin cooking, clear off your counter. This allows more room for preparing your meals.
- Clean as you go. Fill up the sink with soapy water and wash the dishes as you cook. It will make clean up go much smoother and faster.
- Save some for later. Freeze leftover soups, sauces, or gravies in small reusable containers.

Keep it simple. Healthy and creative meals do not have to be complicated. The simpler your menu, the less money and stress it will cost you in the end.