

Eating Healthy on a Budget



Short Term Activities:

- Plan ahead: Plan meals and create a shopping list. Follow it as you go through the store.
- Shop the perimeter: This will help avoid junk foods which are usually found on the inside isles of the store.
- Look for generic brands: There is usually a generic brand right next to more expensive brand item on the shelf. Generic items can be significantly cheaper.
- Start the day with a healthy breakfast: Having a good breakfast gives you energy and helps keep you focused for the day.
- Buy fruits and vegetables that are in season: In-season fruits and veggies are generally cheaper. Shop at your local farmers market!
- Buy in bulk: If you are feeding a family, it can be cheaper to buy foods in bulk. This will save you money in the long run. Store items in air-tight containers or freeze them.
- Buy sales items: Find out about store sales or look for coupons. Check the newspaper ads or store for flyers.

Long Term Activities:

- Create a weekly menu: Having a food menu prepared for the week will help save time and money. It will also help avoid last minute fast food dinners.
- Plant a garden: Growing your own food can save money and is educational and fun for the whole family.

Tips

Fruits/Veggies



- Buy certain fruits and vegetables by the bag vs. by piece (apples, oranges potatoes, onions).
- Buy in-season. It is cheaper and taste fresher.
- Buy frozen fruits and veggies - they are cheaper and are just as nutritious as fresh because they are packaged at their peak of freshness.
- When buying canned foods, choose foods that are low in sodium. Be careful of canned fruits in juice - it can be filled with syrup.

Whole Grains



- Oatmeal is nutritious and affordable. Try adding blueberries/fresh fruit for a heart-healthy breakfast.
- Be sure to buy 100% whole wheat bread. Some bread will claim that they are “wheat” but it is white bread that has brown dye.
- Look for day old breads. They are cheaper and still fresh.

Lean Proteins



- Buy less prepared proteins. Season your meats at home.
- Eggs and beans are great sources of proteins. Mix it up!
- Stretch your dollar! Canned fish and chicken are low-cost proteins and good for sandwiches, salads and casseroles. They are also much cheaper. Other options include: dried beans, peas and lentils.

Dairy



- Buy large containers of plain vanilla yogurt and add your own fruit. Single-serve, fruit flavored yogurts are much higher in sugar.

Eating Healthy on a Budget



Dining Out



- Reduce portion sizes: Ask for a to-go box and take half of your meal home and have for lunch the next day.
- Limit dining out and fast food. Foods are higher in cost, fat, salt and calories.

Source: University of California, Riverside. *Healthy Eating and Exercise on a Budget*. Retrieved from http://wellness.ucr.edu/Healthy_Eating_and_Exercise_on_a_Budget.pdf