

Eating healthy on a budget

Did you know that people who plan before they visit the store can save hundreds of dollars on food every year? Many people think healthy eating is too expensive. But there are lots of ways to eat healthy and not blow your budget. Making the choice to start eating healthy is step one. Step two is knowing what to buy and getting a shopping plan in place.

Make a List - and Stick to It!

Making a list cuts down on buying things you really don't need. Check the weekly ads of the stores in your area to find the best deals on healthy options. Everyone knows fruits and vegetables are good for you. But buying in season items and frozen options can help you save money. For meat, check for price per pound deals and consider buying larger portions and freezing what you don't use. Don't get hung up on the packaging. Many times store-branded items are more affordable than brand name items.

Check the Labels.

Frozen and canned food items can be healthy! Read food labels and choose items with lower salt and sugar. This is a good way to make sure what you are buying is healthier. Look for:

- Vegetables in water with low salt
- Canned fruits in water, not syrup
- Frozen veggies without sauces
- Frozen, no sugar added fruit
- Low sodium soups that are broth based rather than cream
- Instant whole grain rice rather than flavored rice packets

Buy Items You Can Use More Than Once.

Leftovers don't have to be boring! Get creative and think about how you can cook once but eat twice. For example, whole chickens are usually a low-cost protein source that can be used for multiple meals. Bake the chicken with veggies for dinner one night, then use the leftovers for tomorrow's meal. From tacos to stir-fry to soup, the possibilities are endless!

Buy in Bulk.

Going in with a friend or family member to purchase large quantities of items can help keep your spend down. If you don't have anyone to share bulk items with, break them down into smaller quantities. Freeze the portions for fast and easy use later.

