Eat Healthy Your Way

Eating healthy on a budget

Take these three easy steps to pick and prepare healthy foods while minding your wallet! Check off the tips you will try.

Step 1: Plan ahead before you shop

Rodney: I plan what I'm going to make for dinner for the whole week. Then I make out my grocery list and never shop hungry. This way I stick to my list and don't buy pricey items on a whim. Since I have all the ingredients for my meals, I'm not tempted to order a pizza or run out for fast food. Eating at home keeps me on budget, and I am eating better too.

- ❑ **Read the store flier to find out what is on special for the week.**
  - ➤ Plan your meals around the sale items. Look for lean meats, fat-free and low-fat dairy items, and fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables featured that week.
- ❑ **Shop with a list.**
  - ➤ Make a shopping list **before** you go to the store as you plan what meals you'd like to make for the week. Stick to a list and avoid buying items on impulse . . . and off your budget.

Step 2: Shop to get the most value for your money

Carla: I buy fresh fruits and vegetables in season and save money this way. If I want berries in winter, I buy the frozen kind. Or, when I see chicken breasts or turkey breasts on sale, I buy several packs and freeze any extras to use later.

- ❑ **Buy sale items and generic or store brands.**
  - ➤ Buy items featured in the store flier. Buy store or generic brands, as they often cost less than name brands.
- ❑ **Choose frozen.**
  - ➤ Buy frozen vegetables without added sauces or butter. They are as good for you as fresh and can cost far less.
- ❑ **Buy in bulk, then make your own single-serving packs at home.**
  - ➤ Mix a big box of whole-grain cereal with raisins and a dash of cinnamon. Put in small baggies for on-the-go snacking.
  - ➤ Peel and cut up a big bag of carrots. Put in small baggies for lunches or an anytime healthy snack.

(turn over please)

For more information, visit www.healthfinder.gov

Small changes can make a large difference

Step 3: Make cost-cutting meals

Padma: Stretch your food dollars by making a second meal from leftovers—just add items you already have in your pantry. I took last night's leftover baked chicken and cut it into small pieces. Then I added a can of black beans, a chopped onion, two cloves of garlic, spices, and some chopped tomatoes. I made a low-cost, tasty meal in 15 minutes! And my family got a healthy dinner.

❑ **Make a second meal or a side dish from leftovers.**

Stretch your dollars by adding items you already have on hand to make a second meal or tasty side dish.

- ➤ Use leftover chicken or turkey in casseroles, soups, chili, stir-fries, or tacos.
- ➤ Use leftover brown rice in soups and casseroles. For a great side dish, cook brown rice with vegetables and a beaten egg in a pan coated with cooking spray.
- ➤ Add leftover cooked or raw vegetables to salads, omelets, or casseroles. Add the leftover veggies to whole-wheat pasta and water-packed tuna for a healthy, low-cost meal.
- ➤ Mix leftover fresh or canned fruit (packed in fruit juice) with low-fat plain yogurt or low-fat cottage cheese. Or put the fruit in oatmeal for a "good-for-you" breakfast.

❑ **Go meatless one or more days a week.**

- ➤ Replace meat with beans for a less costly way to get lean protein. Beans and brown rice are a nutritious way to stretch a dollar. Add lentils to soups. They are delicious, cook up quickly, and are packed with protein and fiber.
- ➤ Make breakfast for dinner! Prepare a vegetable omelet with eggs, spinach, tomatoes, mushrooms, and reduced-fat cheese. Serve with fruit and whole-wheat toast. Your kids will love the "upside-down day" that is budget-friendly for you!

❑ **Visit the Internet for recipe ideas.**

- ➤ Look on the Internet for many healthy recipes. Just type the words "healthy meals on a budget" in the search engine. Or visit **http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov** to get recipe ideas that are easy on the wallet and good for your body.

We hope these budget-stretching ideas will help you as you take steps to eat healthy.

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