Healthy Eating on a Budget

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What We Will Discuss

- Money saving shopping
- Budget stretching
- Creative and cost cutting cooking
- Maximizing nutrition with simple recipes to eat at home
Money Saving Tips
Plan Ahead

• What meals do you want to prepare this week?
• What days are best for you to cook?
• Make a list and stuck to it!
Don’t Shop Hungry!
Try to Shop Alone

• Spouses, friends, relatives, co-workers, and children can all be distractions while shopping
• Too many distractions may cause us to rush, impulse buy, or not carefully review a label or price.
• Try to shop when you have the most time, are minimally distracted, or when you have a sitter.
Wear Blinders

- Items at the end of aisles are NOT always a good deal
- Items that specially displayed can be a trap for buying an item not on your list
- New product sampling with coupons can be dangerous
- Once again, stick to your list!
Go Local

• Support local farmers
• Know exactly where your food is grown
• Know how your food is grown
• Sometimes it can be cheaper depending on availability of crops
Buy Generic

• Look for store-brand or generic brand versions of products that you normally buy
• Compare ingredient lists, nutrition information, and price
• You may look above or below the brand name products. Generic and store brands are often NOT placed at eye level.
Check Unit Prices

• The unit price of an item is found on the grocery shelf
• An item that is “on sale” may have a higher per unit price than one that is not
• It may take a little longer to shop but it will be worth it!
Compare Food Labels

- Check the labels of similar items when deciding on a product.
- You may be able to opt for the cheaper or cheapest if the ingredients and nutrition information are very similar.
Check the Sale Rack
Use Coupons

• Great for saving money on products that you buy regularly
• Beware of coupons for new products
• Double check in-store coupons and specials
• Don’t use a coupon as the reason for buying a product
Apply for a Store Card

• Download coupons to your card online
• Receive unique coupons for items you buy regularly at home
• Be eligible for in-store promotions and specials
• Discounts on gasoline at stores that have gas stations
Bring your own Bags

• Get a few cents off your grocery order for each bag you use
• Donate to a charity of your choice for using reusable shopping bags
• Save the environment from excess plastic bags.
Do your own Preparation

• Buying pre-cut, pre-washed, ready to use produce costs more
• Shredded, cubed, and sliced cheese costs more per ounce than a large block of cheese
• Involve your family
Invest in a Freezer

- You have the liberty to buy in bulk when freezer items are on sale.
- You can make extra of a freezable meal and save it for another time.
- Less frequent trips to the store.
Make your own Cold Cuts

• Slicing or shaving your own is cheaper than buying pre-cut or deli meats
• Buy meats such as ham, turkey, and roast beef on sale to use for sandwiches
• This is also a healthier alternative since processed meat tend to have a high sodium, nitrate, and preservative contents
Save the Plastic

• Just like reusing bags, we should reuse bottles, too

• Invest in a water filter for your tap and reuse the same bottle for your lunch instead of buying bottled water

• Brew your own iced tea or make your own lemonade

• Decrease soda and other bottled drinks
Brown Bag it

- Bring your lunch to work instead of eating out
- Plan to have leftovers to bring for lunch
- Keep convenient “lunch type” items on hand
- Make a sandwich
Don’t Waste it

• Use overripe fruit for smoothies or bread/muffins
• Stale bread makes great breadcrumbs
• Keep leftover scraps and small amounts of vegetables in the freezer for use in casseroles and soups
• Be creative and find other uses!
Freeze Properly

- Make sure that you have the right containers
- Remove all air from freezer bags before placing in freezer
- Label everything in detail including contents and preparation date
- Use a freezer safe/permanent marker
Grow your Own

- Start small, try one or two things at a time
- Use planters if you don’t have space in a yard
- Grow herbs, vegetables, and fruit
- It just may become a new found hobby!
Compost

• Make your own fertilizer and decrease amount of waste for trash, garbage, etc.
• Helps to preserve landfill space while providing a very nutrient dense feed for soil
• Notice a difference in your plants, flowers, and other items in your garden after incorporating compost
Cost Cutting Cooking Tips
Batch Cooking

- Cook when you have the most time
- Make enough to divide into more than one meal
- Allows for quick dinners
- Decreases need/temptation to go out to eat or go through a “drive-thru”
Go Meatless

- Meat is expensive
- A vegetable based diet has health benefits
- Non-meat sources of protein are cheaper
- Vegetarian dishes can be simple, tasty, and healthy
Buying Meat

• Tougher and leaner cuts are usually cheaper
• Stewing, roasting, and marinating are good cooking techniques for leaner meats
• Use less meat than a recipe calls for
• Buy meat in bulk quantities when on sale and separate into smaller packages and freeze for later
Use Whole Grains

- Brown rice, quinoa, barley, whole wheat pasta, etc.
- Make great side dishes
- Use as a filler in recipes
- Great for leftovers
- Can be inexpensive if bought plain and in a larger quantity
Buy Beans

- An inexpensive protein source and source of fiber
- Buy canned or dry beans
- Use in place of meat or to reduce amount of meat
- Try a meatless main dish
Make a Pot of Soup or Chili

- An easy one pot or crock pot meal
- Nutritious if contains veggies, protein, starch, and is low in fat
- Can be frozen for another lunch or dinner
Spruce up a Salad

• Use canned tuna or a leftover grilled chicken breast on a salad to make a meal
• Keep other creative add-ons available such as dried cranberries, raisins, nuts, reduced-fat cheese, and homemade croutons
• Making your own instead of buying one out will save money
Make you own Snacks

• Buy small snack size bags
• Larger quantity snacks are cheaper per ounce
• Assemble your own one serving (a.k.a 100 calorie) packs
• More packaging, more convenience usually equates to a higher price
Use Leftovers Quickly

• The longer it stays in the refrigerator the less likely it will be that you use them
• Have a plan to incorporate leftovers
• Wasting food = wasting money
Do you feel like this?
Asian Beef Stir-Fry

- Makes 4 servings
- Brown rice (buy in bulk)
- Use store brand or generic brand ingredients
- Lite soy sauce for reduced sodium
- Only $8.43 for the entire recipe; $2.10 per serving
Bruschetta and Cheese Stuffed Chicken Breasts

- Part-skim mozzarella cheese is naturally lower in fat than other regular cheeses
- Buy the cheapest canned diced tomatoes; usually at least one brand is on sale
- Use generic or the cheapest brand salad dressing
- Makes 8 servings for $11.50; $1.44 per serving
Cheesy Beef Burritos

- Combined proteins (meat and beans)
- Low-fat cheese
- Light sour cream
- Whole grain tortillas if possible
- Buy cheapest salsa
- Makes 4 servings for $5.20; $1.30 per serving
Spanish Rice

• Pre-packaged, seasoned rice/noodle mixes are extremely high in sodium
• Make your own!
• Makes 4 servings for $1.72; $0.43 per serving
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