

Ideas for Healthy Eating on a Budget

Tips for food shopping

Shop around the outside aisles of stores. Get fresh, less processed foods (you pay for the processing).

- Buy fresh fruits and vegetables in season.
- Most of the time you can find good prices for potatoes, sweet potatoes, greens, carrots, onions, and cabbage.
- Bananas, oranges, apples, raisins, and prunes are almost always a good buy.
- Wash and cut your own lettuce for salads.
- Choose whole chicken or a bulk size bag of chicken pieces.

Look in the frozen food section.

- Choose frozen vegetables without sauces or spices.
- Frozen juice is cheaper than other juice.

Buy things in bulk, like rice, beans, oatmeal, or pasta.

- Buy plain food items. For example, get a bag of rice — not boxed rice mixes with spices. Or buy fresh potatoes, not instant potatoes or other mixes. You may like beans (pinto, red, black, white, or pink). You can also try lentils, split peas, or blackeye peas.
- Choose less processed foods. Buy the long-cooking oatmeal (5 minutes is not that long!), buy cheese in blocks, not sliced, etc.

Milk foods

- Buy plain yogurt, or make your own! It is not that hard (ask us for a recipe), is cheaper, and will have more of the good bacteria than the usual storebought yogurt.

Plan your menu for the week.

- Plan menus around foods that are in season or on sale.
- Make extra, and freeze to use later.
- Plan for leftovers. For example, serve grilled chicken one night and chicken soup the next.

Don't buy on impulse.

- Make a shopping list ahead of time.
- Shop when you are not hungry.
- Shop without your children when you can. Candies and toys are often put at children's eye level. That can get expensive.
- Only use coupons to buy foods you normally eat.

Compare prices. Prices may be cheaper at:

Large supermarket stores

Discount warehouses, Food buying clubs

Farmer's markets

Food co-ops

Choose these easy meals and snacks

Easy meals:

Sandwiches or wraps with whole grain wrappers (or use lettuce for your wrap):

- Egg salad sandwich
- Tuna salad sandwich (don't overdo tuna while pregnant)
- Peanut butter and jelly sandwich
- Chicken salad sandwich

Mexican food:

- Bean and veggie burritos
- Eggs with salsa and tortillas
- Rice and beans with tortillas

Soups (make a big pot and freeze portions):

- Lentil or bean soup
- Chili with cornbread
- Barley soup with carrots and meat
- Chicken and vegetable soup

Pasta (whole wheat is best!):

- Spaghetti with tomato sauce – add veggies to bottled sauce
- Tuna noodle casserole
- Vegetable and cheese lasagna
- Pasta salad with veggies and beans

Stir-fries:

- Stir-fried tofu and vegetables with soy sauce and sesame oil
- Thai Stir-fry tofu and vegetables with light coconut milk and curry
- Italian sauté with veggies in tomato sauce with oregano, rosemary, etc.

Other:

- Baked potato with cheese and broccoli
- Quinoa and black bean salad

Healthy snacks:

Often leftovers from meals make great snacks – think outside the bag!

- Leftovers from anything in column 1
- Fresh fruit or dried fruit
- Hard boiled eggs
- Small “pizza” on pita bread (sauce, veggies and cheese on pita, toasted in the toaster oven)
- Cottage cheese or yogurt

Salads:

- Fruit salad. Use fruits in season.
- Green salads. Wash and cut your own lettuce mixture.
- Pasta salad with vegetables and beans

Spreads and Dips:

- Veggies with hummus, low fat ranch, or peanut butter
- Corn tortillas, toasted, with bean dip
- Bagel with low-fat cream cheese
- Fruit with yogurt
- Whole grain crackers with bean spreads or nut spreads

Let us know if you are interested in some easy recipes for the suggestions above!