



SCALE BACK ON YOUR WALLET - EATING HEALTHY ON A BUDGET

Eating healthy is no easy task but attempting to do it with limited funds can be even harder. Minding your budget while eating foods that nourish your body takes planning, but it can be done. The following tips will help you spend less on meals that are still nutritious.

Plan your meals- Planning is essential when it comes to saving money. Take one day a week to plan out your meals and make a grocery list of what you need. Check your refrigerator, pantry, and cabinets to see what you already have on hand. Only purchase what you know you will use so you don't end up throwing away a lot of what you buy.

Smart and healthy shopping- Always shop the perimeter of the store first. Most of the fresh foods are found there. But don't skip the middle aisle entirely. There, you will find inexpensive beans and peas, whole grains like brown rice, and nuts and seeds. Stock up on sale items of healthier foods that you may be able to use in a timely manner. Join store reward programs and use coupons.

Cook once eat twice- Serve moderate portions of meals and use inexpensive ingredients if possible. This will help save money and calories. Batch cook when the food budget and time allows. Cook large amounts of your favorite casserole, chili, or spaghetti; divide into family size portions; and freeze promptly for later in the month.

Never shop when you are hungry- Hunger can distract you while grocery shopping and you may end up buying foods that

normally you wouldn't. Eat a piece of fruit, yogurt, or another healthy snack to keep you from straying from your grocery list and making impulse purchases.

Compare products for the best deal- Try store or generic brands. They usually cost less and may be the same quality as more expensive name brand products. Check sell by dates and buy the freshest food possible. Read the ingredient list to make sure you are not getting a product of lower quality than you are used to.

Purchase frozen fruits and vegetables- Buying frozen fruits and vegetables can save you money because fresh fruits and vegetables can sometimes be expensive. Frozen produce is just as nutritious, cheaper, sold in larger bags, and usually available all year. Another advantage is being able to take out only what you need, and the rest can be kept safe from spoiling in the freezer.

Use other proteins instead of meat- Eating less meat is a great way to save money. Consume legumes, eggs, or canned fish one or two days a week. They are very inexpensive and easy to prepare. They are not likely to spoil quickly because they have a longer shelf life. These are all cheap and nutritious forms of protein.

Eating healthy doesn't have to break the bank. Planning your meals, cooking at home, and making wise choices at the grocery store can help you scale back on overspending and still eat healthy.

INCLUSION MATTERS: Planning ahead is the key ingredient in the recipe to eating healthy on a budget. First, check your pantry and refrigerator and see what you can make a meal from with ingredients you already have. Keeping your schedule and budget in mind, write down recipes and meals you would like to have throughout the week and make a grocery list. Organize your grocery list by sections in the grocery store so you can move seamlessly from one end to the other. Mix in canned, frozen, and fresh items to your cart for healthy foods that will last throughout the week. Try using a grocery app and schedule

to pick up your grocery items. This can help you stay within your budget and prevent you from indulging in impulse buys. Check out the National Center on Health, Physical Activity & Disability's [Healthy Eating Survival Kit](#) for more tips!

Quick Tips for Affordable Healthy Eating

- ✓ Plan out meals and snacks, write out your grocery list
- ✓ Use ingredients that are already on hand
- ✓ Incorporate fresh, frozen, and canned produce
- ✓ Order groceries online
- ✓ Are you eligible for [SNAP benefits](#)?

FAMILY MATTERS: Kids can be picky eaters. As a result, you may end up throwing out foods that were moved around on the plate but never actually consumed. This may also lead to preparing two meals – one for the adults and one for the kids which can add cost to your food budget. One way to help combat this is to involve kids in the meal preparation process. Let them add their own twist to a favorite recipe. A hands-on approach will make them feel more invested in the meal and they might be more likely to eat their own creation.

LINKS:

Spend less, save more: aces.edu/blog/topics/for-you/spend-less-save-more-at-the-grocery-store/
Ways to save your dollars: aces.edu/blog/topics/for-you/ways-to-save-your-food-dollars/