

# MYTH: EATING HEALTHY IS EXPENSIVE

## REALITY: HEALTHY EATING DOES NOT HAVE TO BE EXPENSIVE!

There are many ways to eat healthy and stay within your budget. Here are a few tips to help make your meals inexpensive and nutritious.

- **Stay in** - Preparing your own meals at home is cheaper and healthier than eating out. Cooking at home allows you to control what goes into your food, so you can prepare dishes that have fewer calories, are lower in sodium, and still taste great.
- **Pack it up** - Instead of going to the cafeteria, a fast-food restaurant, or that tempting vending machine throughout the day, prepare your lunches and snacks ahead of time. Not only will you save money, but you also have more control over your salt and sugar consumption.
- **Make a list, check it twice** - Make a shopping list based on the meals and snacks you plan to prepare for the upcoming week, and stick to it to avoid less healthy impulse buys.
- **Have a plan** - Figure out how much you can comfortably spend on food, and use this number to guide purchases. Everyone's budget looks different, and healthy foods can be found in every price range. Weekly sales, coupons, buying in season, and choosing store brands over name brands can help cut costs where necessary.
- **Fresh and in season** - Did you know that fruits and vegetables are the tastiest when they're in season? They are also less expensive! Check out local farmers markets for fresh, in-season produce. Have a craving for something that isn't in season? Canned and frozen fruits and vegetables are also good choices! For vegetables, look for lower sodium versions without sauces or gravies. Fruits should be packed in water, 100% fruit juice, or light syrup.
- **Let's be real** - Keeping healthy foods on hand is important, but only if we actually eat them! Hate the taste of spinach? Don't buy it. There are lots of other dark green veggie choices. Food waste is wasted money, so be sure to keep fruits and veggies on hand that you know will be eaten. By all means, try a new food or recipe, but be sure to stock up on things you know you enjoy, and sprinkle in a new recipe or food here and there until you're sure it's a winner.
- **No Hangry shopping** - Timing your shopping trip for after you've eaten can help you stick to your list. Tempting treats are hard enough to ignore on a full stomach. Keeping a healthy snack handy can help tide you over during any last-minute trips to the grocery store.

**INCLUSION TIPS:** When prepping foods in the kitchen, know that there are many tools and tips for users with unsteady hands and limited mobility and/or vision. An adapted cooking utensil is a tool used in the kitchen that may have some type of modification in order to enhance the cooking and eating experience. Adapted kitchen utensils can be used by anyone, but they especially create an easier, more independent, and safer cooking experience for some individuals who have a disability. Many kitchen items include easy grips, non-skid material, or holders. A few examples of these [assistive tools](#) may be angled utensils, pronged cutting boards, lipped plates, grip straps, spout cups, or a variety of openers. Most tools can easily be found online or in a store.

When at the grocery store, try to shop the perimeter of the store. This is where most fresh produce and healthier items are found.

If you have a question about a food or simply need help carrying ingredients, there is assistance available. Check out NCHPAD's 5 Meals 1 Bag [video](#) for navigating the grocery store. Filling your cart with a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables can help remind you to fill your plate with the same. Learn how to shop the rainbow [here](#).

Look for items that are cheaper in cost such as store brand products vs. name brand products.

[nchpad.org/1674/6771/Cooking~with~a~Disability~Video~Series](http://nchpad.org/1674/6771/Cooking~with~a~Disability~Video~Series)  
[nchpad.org/818/4204/Simplifying~What~to~Eat](http://nchpad.org/818/4204/Simplifying~What~to~Eat)  
[www.nchpad.org/1329/6137/Best~FREE~Apps~for~Your~Health~and~Budget](http://www.nchpad.org/1329/6137/Best~FREE~Apps~for~Your~Health~and~Budget)  
[nchpad.org/1324/6130/Top~10~Tips~to~Eating~Healthy~on~a~Budget](http://nchpad.org/1324/6130/Top~10~Tips~to~Eating~Healthy~on~a~Budget)

**FAMILY MATTERS:** Talk with your family about what they like for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Get them involved in meal planning and budgeting!

## LINKS:

**Eating Healthy on a Budget:** [choosemyplate.gov/budget](http://choosemyplate.gov/budget)

**Tips to Eating Healthy on a Budget:** [nia.nih.gov/health/10-tips-eating-healthy-budget](http://nia.nih.gov/health/10-tips-eating-healthy-budget)

**Healthy, Inexpensive Recipes:** 10 Healthy Dinners on a Budget : [foodnetwork.com/healthy/photos/10-healthy-dinners-for-about-10](http://foodnetwork.com/healthy/photos/10-healthy-dinners-for-about-10)