



Eating Healthy on a Budget

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With the economic situation in the world being what it is, it's important to find ways of eating healthy on a budget. It's possible to purchase foods that are good for you *and* your budget; you merely have to plan ahead to get the best food you can for the money you have available.

Having a plan and sticking to it can help you get more food at less cost and allow you to prepare better, more healthy meals.

Here are some tips to help you succeed in eating healthy on a budget:

Grocery Shopping

- 1. Set aside time to make your food plan.** Find the sales ads for each of the grocery stores in your area and decide on your meals for the coming week ahead of time.
- 2. Make a list.** After you've planned your meals, write down everything you need for each meal. Check your pantry, freezer, and refrigerator to see if you already have some of the items. ***Make your grocery list and determine to stick with it!***
 - Include what you'll need for drinks, snacks and desserts.
 - Remember your ingredients for preparation, such as butter, flour, sugar, and spices.
 - Replenish cleaning supplies.
- 3. Clip coupons** for items you know you'll use. Leave the remainder of the coupons at home so you're not tempted to save money on items you don't need.
- 4. Never go grocery shopping on an empty stomach** because you're more likely to buy items that look good rather than those on your list.

- If you can't go to the store right after a meal, take along a light snack to help you resist temptation while in the store.
- 5. Buy items on the perimeter of the store first** because these items are the healthiest choices. This will include fruits, vegetables, meats, and dairy items. The center items are processed or convenience foods. Not only are they more expensive, but they aren't healthy.
 - 6. Look for fruits and vegetables that are in season** as these will often be cheaper than non-seasonal choices. While you're looking at the fruits and vegetables, see if there are any sales on these healthy, nutrient rich foods.
 - Choose large bags rather than individual pieces of fruit. The larger bags are often cheaper by the pound.
 - 7. Buy store or generic brands.** There usually isn't much difference in the way the foods taste but you can definitely see a difference in the price.

Other Ways to Eat Healthy on a Budget

- 1. Make your own snacks** for your family's time away from home rather than allowing them to purchase food from vending machines. Fresh fruit and vegetable sticks with dip are much healthier than the bags of chips or crackers that come from the machines.
- 2. Eat at home.** Whenever possible, make your food from scratch and eat it at home. Not only will this give you more control over what your family eats, but it can also save you a considerable amount of money.
 - Eating out also encourages overeating because portion sizes are massive.
- 3. Drink healthy.** Finally, when eating healthy on a budget, don't forget to think about what you're drinking. Expensive, sugar-laden drinks are the bane of your budget and counter-productive to healthy eating.
 - Look for 100% pure juices.
 - Drink low fat milk.
 - Drink more water.
 - Cut out soft drinks.

If you follow these tips, you'll soon discover the joys of healthy eating and you'll save money in the process. You may have to spend some extra time preparing food, but the benefits are astounding!