

Healthy Eating on a Budget



We would all love to be able to **eat healthy** 100% of the time, but because of budgets & busy schedules, that just doesn't happen. Here are some tips on how to eat healthy on any budget:

- **Start small.** Replace sugary cereals with eggs and oatmeal, buy real butter instead of margarine, and buy a few more veggies than usual (frozen is economical and doesn't spoil quickly). Then, the next step is to have a healthy breakfast that includes protein, fat, and carbohydrates to keep you focused in the morning. Keep making small steps toward eating healthily throughout the day.
- **Plan ahead.** Take the time to write out grocery lists to insure that you have the healthy foods you need on hand. Shopping with a list prevents you from making poor food decisions and from spending too much.
- **Buy in bulk.** Food in bulk bins or larger packages is usually cheaper per unit (lb or oz). You can share or trade with family members and friends if the price is right, but you can't use it all yourself. Nuts and whole grains often cost less in bulk. If you get a good deal on fresh produce or larger chicken and meat packages, you can always freeze what you can't use right away. You can also stock up when things go on sale.
- **Buy frozen.** Frozen fish, meat, and produce can cost much less than fresh—and frozen is at least as healthy as fresh. You can also freeze fresh food that you won't be able to eat right away.
- **Utilize leftovers.** Throw the veggies that are about to go bad into soups, or blend up for as a drink or smoothie. Mix whatever you've got on hand into a crock pot, use what you've got in your freezer. Let nothing go to waste!
- **Head to the farm.** Buy local produce when you can from farms, farmer's markets, and locally-grown produce markets. Many local farmers don't use pesticides, even if not certified organic. Organic dairy products can be expensive, but much of the cost is for cooling during storage and transportation. You can cut cost by going directly to the source. There are over 30 organic dairies in Washington state—do an online search to find the one nearest you. Locally-raised food is freshest and healthiest. Buying food locally helps keep our farmers in business.
- **Do-It-Yourself.** Much of the cost of ready-to-eat foods comes from the fact that someone else has done all the work for you. Making food from scratch is more effort, but can be much less expensive. Try making your own yogurt, salad dressing, or mayonnaise at home. Homemade soups, chili, and stews with beans and whole grains are loaded with nutrition, and can cost pennies per serving.
- **Shop around.** Supermarket sales, WinCo, Trader Joe's, Grocery Outlet and local ethnic markets can offer significant savings. Sometimes it's cheapest to make your own. Make note of prices when you're out shopping, and read ads to determine the best places to get your favorite healthy foods.
- **Know what to splurge on.** Instead of spending on "empty" calories such as soda, chips, candy, juice, cookies and snack cakes, use those dollars to buy more vegetables, fruits, and whole grains or some organic food items. Talk to your HealthPoint nutritionist about which organic foods to focus on, or to learn how you can best fit organic or any healthier foods in your budget. And, don't feel you have to buy organic to eat healthy. It is most important to eat real, whole foods, rather than processed food products, junk food, fast food, and sugary foods and drinks.

Source: HealthySimpleLife.com



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