

# Eating Well on a Budget

**Eating wisely doesn't have to be expensive. Here are a few tips on ways to eat well on a budget while keeping your calories and your budget in balance:**

- Plan your weekly menu of meals and snacks in advance. Include meals like stews, casseroles, or stir-fries, which “stretch” expensive items into more portions. Check to see what foods you already have, make a grocery list, and stick to it.
- Clip coupons, and use weekly ads for the best sales. Ask about a loyalty card for extra savings at stores where you shop.
- Do not shop when you are hungry! It's easier to stick to your shopping list.
- Compare store and generic brands for the best buy.
- Take advantage of sales. Buy and cook in bulk, and freeze or use leftovers for future meals.
- Stretch costly meals (like meat dishes) by substituting beans and adding more vegetables.
- Read food labels (Nutrition Facts) to get the best nutrition and the most value for your money. See the “How to Read a Food Label” MOVE!® Handout.



- Buy in season, choosing fresh vegetables and fruit. Visit your local farmers' market or shop for discounted produce, or better yet, grow your own vegetables, fruit, or herbs.
- Stock up on canned or frozen vegetables and fruit that go on sale. This is a great alternative to fresh produce and can save money. Select fruit that is frozen, unsweetened, or canned in its own juice. Select vegetables without added salt, butter, or cream sauces.
- Shop for beans, peas, eggs, canned tuna (packed in water), and peanut butter, which are good sources of protein and good buys.
- Purchase whole-grain foods (pasta, bread, rice) as they are a good source of fiber and make inexpensive side dishes.
- Go back to the basics by making meals from scratch. Convenience foods like frozen dinners, pre-cut vegetables, and instant rice, oatmeal, or grits will cost you more than if you make them from scratch. Get creative making meals and using leftovers!

