

# Purdue Extension Does...Eating Healthy on a Budget!

## *Easy as EAT! (Article from eatgathergo.org)*

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Eating healthy does not have to be expensive. Use these tips to make healthy choices while staying within your budget. Check out these simple tips below and learn more at [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov).

### Create a Grocery Game Plan

Before heading to the grocery store, get organized. Look in your freezer, cabinets and refrigerator. See what items you already have and save money by using them. Use a worksheet, such as the Grocery Game Plan (found at [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)), to plan your meals and figure out what you need to buy. Write down the meals you want to make during the week. Think about ideas for healthy and low-cost meals based on foods your family enjoys and foods that are good buys. Make a grocery list. Try to buy enough for the whole week and save yourself a shopping trip. Think about your schedule. Choose meals you can make easily on your busiest days. Save recipes that take longer for your days off.

### Shop Smart to Fill Your Cart

If you have the freezer space, buy frozen vegetables without added sauces or butter. They are as good for you as fresh and may cost less. Use canned and frozen fruits and vegetables. They last much longer than fresh and are a quick way to add fruits and vegetables to your meal. Buy “in season” fruits and veggies if you can. They usually cost less and are at their peak flavor. Buy only what you can use before it spoils. Learn to read labels. Especially check the Nutrition Facts label to see the amount of fat, sodium and added sugars in the foods and beverages you choose. To lower meat costs, buy the family-sized or value pack, and freeze what you do not use. Choose lean meats like chicken or turkey. When choosing ground beef, make sure it's lean (92% lean/8% fat) ground beef. Do not forget about eggs! They are a great low-cost option that is easy to prepare. Always check the sell by date to make sure you are buying the freshest dairy products. Choose rice and pasta for budget-friendly grain options. Drink water instead of buying sodas or other sugary drinks. Tap water is easy on your wallet and has zero calories. Choose the checkout lane without the candy, especially if you have kids with you.

### Prepare Healthy Meals

**Think smarter.** Use these timesaver tips to cut your time in the kitchen. By taking the stress and hassle out of cooking, you will have more time to enjoy it and to spend with your loved ones.

- Organize your kitchen. Keep frequently used items such as cooking oils/sprays, spatulas, cutting boards and spices within easy reach. This will save you from having to search for them later.
- Clear the clutter. Before you start cooking, clear off your counters. This allows more room for prep space.
- Clean as you go. Fill up the sink with soapy water and wash the dishes as you cook. It will make clean up go much smoother!
- Save some for later. Freeze leftover soups, sauces or gravies in small reusable containers.

**Keep it simple.** Healthy and creative meals do not have to be complicated. The simpler your menu, the less money and stress it will cost you in the end.

For more tips on eating healthy, be sure to visit [www.eatgathergo.org](http://www.eatgathergo.org) or contact Ashlee at Purdue Extension – Dubois County at 812-482-1782 or [avniehau@purdue.edu](mailto:avniehau@purdue.edu).