



# Save when shopping

TIPS TO HELP YOU AND YOUR FAMILY EAT WELL ON A BUDGET

**A** lot of us think that filling up our grocery cart—especially with healthy foods—will empty our wallet. But don't buy into this thinking.

"It is possible to shop for food on a tight budget without sacrificing nutrition," emphasizes Angela Ginn-Meadow, RD, a spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association (ADA).

That's provided you're willing to do your homework and plan several days' menus—or better yet, a week's worth of menus, says Ginn-Meadow.

## Find freedom in planning

"Planning allows you to stick to a shopping list and avoid extra trips to the store, which means you'll be less likely to spend money on budget-busting impulse buys," she explains.

It also lets you:

- Take an inventory of what you already have in your pantry and refrigerator so that you don't overbuy.
- Check supermarket specials in newspaper inserts and plan your meals around them.
- Clip or download coupons, remembering to comparison shop. Some-

times, a store brand is cheaper than a brand-name food discounted with a coupon, Ginn-Meadow says.

## Simple strategies

But while planning is the first—and most important—step toward eating well on a budget, these strategies from Ginn-Meadow, the National Institutes of Health and the ADA can also help:

- Don't head to the store hungry. "With an empty stomach, you're likely to wind up putting not-so-healthy snack foods and desserts in your cart," she says.
- Buy produce in season, when it's likely to be more flavorful and cost less than at other times. And don't overlook frozen fruits and vegetables. They can be cheaper than their fresh counterparts, and they can be just as nutritious—especially if they're not swimming in butter or a fat-filled sauce.
- Stretch protein dollars. Substitute low-fat, fiber-rich dried beans for meat, which is more expensive than beans. Buy a whole chicken rather than pricier, pre-cut breasts, wings, thighs,

or legs. Cut the chicken into pieces yourself, and remove the fatty skin before cooking or serving.

- Think twice about the cost of convenience. Buying prepared or precooked foods typically adds to grocery bills.
- Save on milk and yogurt. Opt for inexpensive, nonfat dry milk when cooking or baking. And instead of buying small containers of calcium-rich yogurt, buy a less costly quart of yogurt and divide it into one-cup servings.
- Save on snacks. Fill small plastic bags with nuts and seeds, whole-grain cereal, or dried fruit rather than buying less nutritious, more expensive prepackaged and processed snacks.
- Finally, always check out the nutrition label as well as the price. Yes, the soda, chips, or cookies you're about to put in your cart may be on sale. "But to get the most value for your money, don't buy foods that add calories without adding nutrients," Ginn-Meadow says.



Get a lot of nutrition for your money—shop at a farmers market near you! To find one, visit [farmersmarketsnm.org](http://farmersmarketsnm.org).

