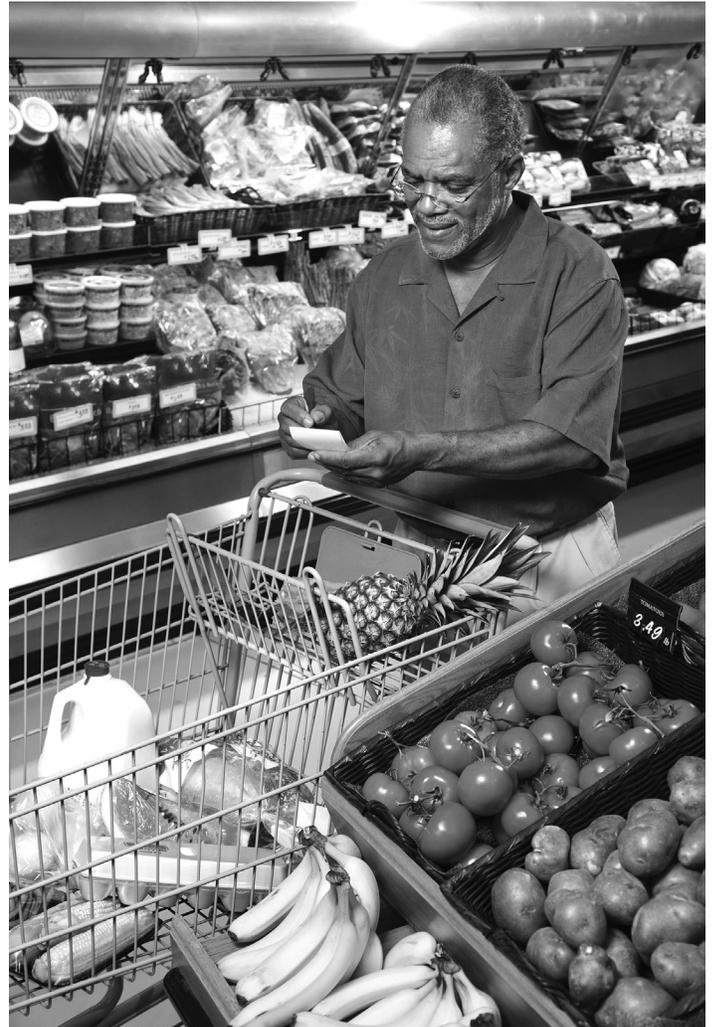


Make the most of your food dollars

If it seems like you are spending more money every time you go to the grocery store, you are right. Food prices are increasing and continue to rise. Although you can't control food prices, you can shop wisely and manage the food you have on hand to get the best value for your food dollars. What can you do? A little planning can go a long way to help you eat healthy without breaking your food budget.

Shop smart

- Only go to the store once a week
- Shop with a grocery list organized by the store layout
- Buy only what is on the list
- Shop the ads — build your grocery list from the sale ads
- Use coupons only for items you would normally buy
- Shop at the local farmers market for in-season produce
- Buy nonfood items — like cleaning supplies and personal care items — at discount stores
- Stock up on non-perishable foods when they are on sale
- Buy store or generic brands instead of name-brand items
- Read the labels
- Use unit pricing to compare costs



- Shop the outer aisles in the grocery store—the inner aisles have higher priced processed foods and snacks

How can I eat healthier snacks on a limited budget?

- ◆ Start with the basics by selecting foods from the dairy, fruit, vegetable and grain groups. Foods from these groups contribute nutritional value at a lower price.
- ◆ There are many convenience items (prepackaged individual portions) that are healthy.
- ◆ Shop around and look at nutritional labels for better bargains.
- ◆ Planning can save you money. Make a shopping list and bring snacks with you to work or school.

Amanda Stevens, Dietetic Intern, University of Missouri-Columbia; Candance Gabel, MS, RD, LD, Associate State Nutrition Specialist, University of Missouri-Columbia



Don't waste food

- Eat all the food you purchase and decrease the amount of food waste.
- Make plans for all the food you purchase and follow through with those plans.
- Plan to make leftovers so you won't be throwing food away. Use leftovers as ingredients to make a new meal the next day.

Grow your own

- Plant a garden. Even a small one adds variety to your food choices and saves money. Plus, gardening can add physical activity to your daily routine.
- Children who help plant and grow a garden are more likely to eat the vegetables they grow.

Try meatless

- Plan a couple of meatless meals every week.
- Beans are a great inexpensive source of protein. Try a vegetarian chili or bean burrito.

Eat out less

- Reduce the number of times that you eat out. Meals out cost two to three times more than making them at home.

Limit convenience

- Foods from vending machines or convenience stores cost more and it is harder to find healthy options. Take nutritious snacks with you instead.
- Ready-to-cook foods often cost more than if you prepare them yourself from scratch.