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4-H & YOUTH

ENVIRONMENT

AGRICULTURE

FOOD



UNIVERSITY OF
VERMONT

EXTENSION

CULTIVATING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

In Your Hands

Planning Makes Perfect



You and your family can plan healthy meals that will save money and cut down on food waste. Consider using the following tips to help you and your family eat better for less.

1 Make a Budget

- 💰 Decide how much money you have to spend on food each month. Remember to include the value of 3SquaresVT and WIC vouchers, if you have them.
- 💰 Now divide your monthly budget by 4 to find out how much you can spend each week.

3 Make a List

- 📋 Making a list of the items you need can save you \$\$, if you stick to it.
- 📋 Include all food and non-food items you need for the week.
- 📋 To save time while shopping, list items together that are located near each other in the store.

2 Plan Your Meals

- 🕒 Make a list of the food you have on hand. Plan to use items that will expire first.
- 🕒 Use store ads and coupons to plan meals around items that are on sale.
- 🕒 Are there some very busy days? Plan for leftovers or simple meals on those days.
- 🕒 Think about MyPlate. Does your meal plan include a variety from all five food groups?

4 To the Store

- ☑ Don't go to the store hungry. Hungry shoppers tend to buy more.
- ☑ If possible, shop alone. Family members can sometimes talk us into buying things that aren't in the meal plan.
- ☑ Non-food items, like paper products and cleaners are often less expensive at discount stores.
- ☑ Store brands are less expensive and taste just as good.
- ☑ Look high, look low. Stores place their most expensive products at eye level.



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Savvy Shoppers Buying Guide

Check out these food group buying tips! These ideas can help you boost your family's nutrition without breaking the bank.

Vegetables



- Buy fresh vegetables that are in season.
- Frozen veggies can be an easy and nutritious addition to many of your favorite dishes, and are often less expensive to buy.
- Stock up on “low” or “no” sodium canned vegetables when they are on sale.
- Grow your own in a garden or in containers. Herbs and some lettuces can even be grown on a window sill!
- Buy produce in its natural form. Pre-cut vegetables cost more.

Color your plate with a rainbow of vegetables



Grains

- Buy dried grain products, like rice and pasta, in bulk to save money.
- Look for the words “100% whole grain.” Foods labeled as “multi-grain,” “100% wheat,” or “seven-grain” are usually not 100% whole-grain products, and may not contain any whole grain at all.

Make at least half your grains whole grains

Make half your plate fruits and vegetables

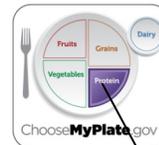
Dairy



- Shop for store brands. These are often less expensive than name brands.
- Consider unit pricing when choosing dairy products. Often larger packages are a better buy.
- Stock up on sale items, and freeze what you can't use. This works well for cheese and butter.

Choose fat free or low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese

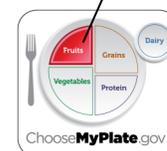
Protein



- Choose low-cost protein options, such as dried beans, eggs, and tofu.
- Buy simple cuts of meat and do the trim work yourself.
- Purchase less meat and add oatmeal, breadcrumbs, or other healthy fillers to ground meat.
- Go big! Family sized packages usually cost less per pound. Label and freeze unused portions.

Vary your protein choices

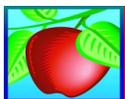
Fruits



- Buy fresh fruit in season, when it may be less expensive.
- Keep a variety of fruit available in your home. Canned fruits packed in water or 100% juice, and frozen fruits packed without sugar are easy and less costly options.
- Dried fruits, such as raisins, offer a quick, nutritious snack option.

UVM Extension's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program helps limited resource families, their children and pregnant women learn to shop smarter, eat healthier, and save money. For more information, please contact: (802) 656-2311 or 1-877-337-5826 (toll-free in Vt.) efnep@uvm.edu

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