

Save money and time by planning, shopping and preparing your meals.



Plan

1. Check the pantry and refrigerator. Plan for using items you already have.
2. Read store ads for specials.
3. Review thrifty recipes. Homemade is usually cheaper and healthier.
4. Plan menus. Plan for using leftovers.
5. Make a list. Arrange by store layout.

Shop

1. Plan enough time to shop.
2. Choose fruits and vegetables "in season."
3. Look for store brands.
4. Use unit pricing. Bigger is not always cheaper.
5. Use coupons for foods you plan to use
6. Shop on a full stomach.
7. Watch at the check out. Be sure to get the sale price.
8. Stick to your list

Prepare

1. Make meal preparation a family time. Assign easy, safe tasks to children.
2. Plan ahead. Thaw meat overnight in the refrigerator.
3. Do your own cutting and slicing. You will save.
4. Batch cook and freeze. "Cook once – eat twice"
5. Eat breakfast at home and prepare a brown bag lunch to take with you.

Brown Bag Ideas

- **Vegetables and Fruits** – carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, peppers, green beans, peapods, zucchini, cucumber, grapes, bananas, kiwi, melon cubes, no added sugar applesauce or peaches, raisins
- **Proteins** – peanut butter, hummus, cheese sticks
- **Grains** – whole grain bread, crackers, flatbread, sandwich thin
- **Beverage** – Milk, 100% juice, water, Infused water

Recipe Success

- Read entire recipe before starting
- Plan time to start
- Clean counter tops
- Gather equipment and ingredients
- Preheat oven, as needed
- Work one step at a time
- Save favorite recipes

Recipe Websites

- www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/recipes/all
- www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov
- www.foodhero.org/recipes/healthy-recipes



HealthPartners®

Best buys for cost and nutrition

- **Breads and grains** – choose whole grain breads. Look for bargains on day-old varieties. Buy regular brown rice and old-fashioned oats and grits instead of instant varieties to save money and consume less sugar, salt, and calories
- **Vegetables** – buy large bags of frozen vegetables. When choosing canned vegetables, look for “low sodium” or “no salt added” on the label
- **Fruits** – Buy fresh fruit in season, it generally costs less. Frozen and canned fruits are available year round, can save you money, and have similar nutrition values to fresh
- **Low-fat or fat-free milk products**- buy low-fat or fat-free milk, yogurt, and cheese in the largest size that can be used before spoiling. Larger containers cost less per serving than smaller sizes.
- **Meat and beans** – dried beans and peas are a good source of protein and fiber. They can last a year or more without spoiling. Canned tuna packed in water is an inexpensive healthy protein choice. Light tuna has less mercury than white (albacore) tuna.

Unit pricing

The unit price of a product is the baseline cost for each pound, ounce or gram etc., of the product. When comparing unit prices of products it is important to make sure the units are the same (oz., lb., g.) If the units are different you will need to do some calculations.

| Product | Unit Price | Retail Price |
|-----------------|---------------|--------------|
| 32 OZ LF YOGURT | \$0.05 per oz | \$1.62 |
| 6 OZ LF YOGURT | \$0.12 per oz | \$0.72 |