

Healthy Eating on a Budget

Eating healthy – lots of fruits and veggies, lean protein, whole grains – doesn't have to be more expensive. If you shop smart and plan ahead, you'll be surprised at how much goodness you can haul without breaking the bank. The reality is, many of those ready-made, super-fast, prepackaged foods actually cost MORE than homemade foods. And they tend to have more calories, saturated fat, sodium and added sugars.

Planning ahead is key to success.

- Plan out one or two weeks of healthy meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Go through cookbooks and search online for your favorite healthy recipes and map out your meal plan. Don't be afraid to try new things!
- Shop Smart!
 - Keep an eye out for specials and join store rewards programs. You'll be more aware of what's on sale and able to work it into your meal planning. Stock up on frozen and canned produce when it's on sale.
 - Using a grocery list will help you quickly grab the ingredients you need for your healthy meal plan. Consider buying store-brand products, which are often the same as more expensive brand-name ones.
 - Buy fresh fruits and vegetables when in season or on sale.
 - Skip the ready-made foods and individually-packaged snacks. The convenience may be tempting but it's usually healthier and cheaper to prepare these same foods at home.
- Cook over the weekend and store pre-portioned meals in the fridge or freezer. Just thaw and reheat for hassle-free lunches and dinners.
- Cut up fruits and vegetables and keep them handy in the fridge, or pre-pack individual servings for when you're on the go.
- Practices makes perfect.
 - Don't give up! Putting a new healthy routine in place doesn't happen overnight, so don't give up!
 - Make healthy changes one step at a time.

A great resource to help with meal planning: <https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/>

Source: <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition-basics/eat-healthy-on-a-budget-by-planning-ahead>

