

Healthy Eating on a Budget

Purpose To learn about making food choices that are healthy and affordable

Intended Audience All employees

- Suggested Activities**
- Use the *Healthy Eating on a Budget* PowerPoint presentation to help educate employees (See the attached CD).
 - Place table tents on tables in kitchens, break rooms, worksite cafeterias, boardrooms, photocopier rooms, and other key areas.
 - Hand out and/or post fact sheets by elevators, on bulletin boards, in stairwells, and in other key areas.
 - Arrange educational sessions on the topic to be led by a dietitian.
 - Provide information on healthy eating on a budget on the intranet and/or in newsletters.

- Materials**
- Diversity Checklist
 - PowerPoint presentation: *Healthy Eating on a Budget: Eating Value for Your Dollar* (See the attached CD.)
 - Table tents
(See the attached CD and inserts at the back of this binder.)
 - Fact sheet: *Eating Value for Your \$* (Dietitians of Canada)
(See p. 85)
 - How to Access a Dietitian in Nova Scotia
(See Additional Resources, p. 244)
 - Intranet/newsletter messages
(See Communication Materials, p. 205)
 - *Healthy Eating in the Workplace Action Plan Worksheet*
(See Additional Resources, p. 221)
 - *Healthy Eating in the Workplace Participant Evaluation Form*
(See Additional Resources, p. 225)

Eating Value for Your \$

Year Created | 1995

Healthy food doesn't cost a fortune. In fact, you can eat delicious, healthy food and save money! By following these tips you will save \$ while enjoying all the taste that healthy food offers.

Tip 1

Plan ahead!

This is an old tip which is still very important. Plan meals for the coming few days or weeks and then write out a grocery list. No shopping list can result in missed items, last minute menu changes and extra shopping trips, which cost you time, gas and money.

Tip 2

Base your weekly menu on Canada's Food Guide

To be sure that your family is getting a well-balanced diet, check your menu opposite the food groups. Think of food as part of a total diet while remembering that there is no such thing as a 'junk food', only a 'junky diet'!

Tip 3

When it comes to meat, buy only what you need

Many people buy too much meat leaving less money for other foods. Two small servings a day of meat, fish or poultry is all an adult needs. A serving is about the size of a deck of cards (3 ounces or 90 grams). Here are just a few delicious meal ideas:

- marinated beef (a less expensive cut) served on a kebab with lots of vegetables and potatoes
- vegetable beef stew with dumplings
- chicken and vegetable stir-fry with rice
- tomato and meat spaghetti sauce with pasta
- chili with vegetables and kidney beans
- fish steamed with potatoes/ vegetables in foil pouches
- ethnic dishes which are light on meat such as Chinese, Mexican, Indian, Italian, Middle Eastern and Spanish dishes

Tip 4

Try using plant proteins

Protein is in plants too. Occasionally serve a less expensive plant protein such as peanut butter, lentils, split peas, kidney beans or other dried beans instead of a meat dish.

Here are just a few suggestions:

- baked beans and brown bread
- a rice and bean casserole
- corn tortillas and beans
- vegetarian pizza

For more ideas refer to the many vegetarian cookbooks at your local library.

Tip 5

Choose convenience foods carefully

You need to weigh the time and effort spent making food from scratch against the cost, food value and taste of convenience foods. It always costs you money to have someone do your food preparation for you. Think about which foods you will buy and which you can make yourself. Think about cost and convenience, taste and food value. For example, think about:

- Orange juice made from concentrate or frozen orange juice concentrate. Do you really want to pay someone to add the water for you?
- Shredded cheese or a whole piece. Do a quick price comparison one day and you'll be amazed at what you're paying the shredder!
- Cake and bread mixes or ready-to-eat products. They cost more than the ingredients to make them but they make money sense when you're in a hurry.
- Chicken pieces or a whole chicken. Simple meat cutting jobs are very costly. Check the price per kg of a whole chicken versus cut-up pieces and then make your choice.

Tip 6

Buy in bulk

Buying in large quantities saves packaging costs and therefore can often save you money. For example, 10 kg of long grain white rice costs only \$.94 per kg, but 2 kg costs \$1.39 per kg. Buy more and save. You can save money on all your basic foods—pasta, potatoes, rice, flour, oatmeal and beans—by buying in bulk.

Tip 7

Compare and save

You need to know your common food prices to take full advantage of this tip. There is little to lose and a lot to gain by trying a store brand or no name product, at least once. If you check the ingredient list, you'll often find that the only difference is the price!

Of course buying the weekly specials and using coupons also saves you money. But, keep in mind that coupons and specials still require comparison shopping and only save you money if they are items you want and will use. Remember, before heading out the door, be sure to take along your coupons and your list!

VALUE FOR YOUR \$—COMPARE GROCERY BAG 1 (for example)

Food	Amount	Cost
Frozen orange juice	37 oz	\$1.29
Banana	1	\$0.39
Apple	1	\$0.63
<i>Ingredients for homemade chicken pie</i>		
Chicken	1 lb	(\$1.99)
Potatoes	2 lb	(\$0.68)
Carrots	½ lb	(\$0.38)
Frozen peas	1/2 lb	(\$0.58)
Onions	1/4 lb	(\$0.19)
Frozen pie dough	1	(\$0.86)
4 1-lb. pies		\$4.68
Part-skim Mozzarella cheese	800 g	\$8.23
Deli sliced ham	200 g	\$0.94
TOTAL COST		\$16.16

GROCERY BAG 2 (for example)

Food	Amount	Cost
Orange crystals	37 oz	\$0.62
Fruit roll-ups	110 g	\$3.29
Frozen chicken pies	4 ½-lb pies	\$5.56
Mozzarella cheese, processed slices	800 g	\$8.78
Prepackaged sliced ham	200 g	\$1.86
TOTAL COST		\$20.11

Obviously Grocery Bag I will be a lot heavier to carry, since there is a lot more food in it. With the few careful choices made for Grocery Bag I, the family was able to easily choose healthier food and save money.

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For more information, contact a dietitian/nutritionist in your region (Contact your local health department or provincial dietetic association for help.)

THE CANADIAN DIETETIC ASSOCIATION DES DIETETISTES