Healthy AND Affordable Family Meals

Workshop Guide

Judy Fallows, MEd, Chef Leslie Glynn, Alison Books Kaufman, MS, RDN, LDN, Claire Kozower, MS, and Kristen Pufahl Schreck, MS, RDN, LDN
Introduction

The purpose of the Healthy and Affordable Family Meals Workshop Guide is to share how to offer cooking classes in the community with a focus on nutrition and affordable meal ideas. The connection between good health and good nutrition is well documented; however, it is challenging to navigate how to eat healthy while also having a limited food budget. The framework presented in this guide is just one of many ways to offer cooking groups with a nutrition focus; but it is the way we have found is effective in empowering participants to make healthy food changes.

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Challenges of Healthy Food Access

There are many reasons people in the United States go without enough healthy food, but one of these is the challenge of paying for healthy foods and being able to buy enough food meet a family’s needs. Food security for a household means access by all members at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.1 On the other hand, low-income shoppers make concessions, often trying to get the most food for each dollar.2 In fact, having a low food budget alone negatively affects the variety of and nutrients in foods families buy.3 Many low-income families agree cost is the main barrier; however eating more healthy foods is of interest among low-income families.4

Our Food Access Project

It is with this interest in mind that we partnered to promote healthy food access in the City of Waltham, Massachusetts from 2010-2013. In order to do this, our organizations, Jewish Family & Children’s Service (JF&CS), Healthy Waltham (HW), and Waltham Fields Community Farm (the Farm), pooled existing resources and used them in a more coordinated way. Each organization had an expertise to offer: JF&CS had the nutrition expertise with two on-staff registered dietitians; Healthy Waltham had developed partnerships with organizations that serve low-income residents and had an on-staff chef; and the Farm had a vegetable donation program in place with expansion potential. As a result of the coordinated effort, low-income families had increased access to local farm produce, nutrition education, cooking classes, and the tools to build community gardens. All of this enabled us to promote healthy food access, thereby also addressing the risks of obesity and chronic diseases among low-income residents. We hope this guide with curriculum, lesson plans, and planning tips will also help you reach the residents of your communities with meaningful programs.

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3 Darmon, N; Ferguson, E; and Briend, A. A Cost Constraint Alone Has Adverse Effects on Food Selection and Nutrient Density: An Analysis of Human Diets by Linear Programming. J. Nutr. 132:3764-3771, December 2002

Curriculum Description

This curriculum was developed using the model of a chef-RD partnership to select healthy, budget-friendly, simple, and tasty recipes for interactive education workshops and food demonstrations. Benefits of this curriculum include:

- Recipes are taste-tested and meet nutrition standards of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010.
- Recipes are low cost and accessible to a range of cultures including Latino plus other new American cultures.
- Hands-on nature of workshops enables participants to benefit regardless of education level, primary language, or socioeconomic status.
- Lessons are based on the most up-to-date nutrition science available.
- Lessons are offered in a strength-based, dignified, and professional manner that recognizes participants’ financial, physical, geographical, time, and other constraints.
- The philosophy is that small, consistent changes make a big impact over time.
- Workshops can be provided solely to adults or to parents participating with their children. See Appendix F for resources about cooking with children and the importance of family dinners.

Suggested roles to be filled include:

- Outreach and recruitment for workshops
- Chef and/or nutritionist to run workshops
- Volunteer or intern to assist
- Farmer or grocer to source produce (local if possible)
Preparing for a Workshop

Organizing a Workshop

The steps to organizing a workshop include, 1) choosing the target population, 2) determining relevant participant characteristics, and 3) recruiting for the workshop.

Ideas for choosing a target population:

- Residents of a housing authority, apartment complex, or shelter
- Participants of parent groups such as Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs), daycare, or afterschool programs
- Students of an adult learning center or educational program
- Members of faith-based organizations

How to determine relevant participant characteristics:

- What is the primary language of the population? Will translations be needed?
- What time of day is best for this group? Match recipe choice and food amount to time of day. For example, more food may be expected if a workshop is offered during a mealtime.
- Will parents be bringing children with them? Will childcare be offered, or will children participate? If childcare will not be available, it is important to require that participating children are accompanied by an adult who is responsible for their care.

How to successfully recruit participants:

- Determine whether to offer a one-time workshop or a series of two or three workshops. If offering a series, select and advertise all dates at once. Make it clear on promotional materials whether participants are required to attend all workshops in a series.
- Determine whether to have a minimum or maximum number of participants. For the maximum, a ratio of one staff person or volunteer for every six or fewer participants is manageable. Also consider how many people can comfortably fit in the workshop space. It is helpful to use a signup sheet to determine how much food and supplies to bring.
- Create an attractive flyer that includes the following: program title, brief description, recipe, date(s), time, location, how to sign up, and contact information of organizer. If applicable, include whether children can attend, whether childcare will be provided, and whether interpreters will be available. If possible, translate flyers into other languages.
- Places to advertise include posting flyers on bulletin boards, placing in mailboxes or under doors of housing complexes and shelters, advertising in newsletters or events calendars. Ask an enthusiastic member of the community to encourage participants to attend. Distribute reminder flyers and/or make reminder phone calls approximately one week prior to workshop.
Space and Materials

The preparation for running a cooking workshop in the community can vary widely, depending on the resources already available. Required resources include food, supplies, cooking equipment, and storage space. In all, you will need the following:

- **Space to Run the Workshop**: a large enough room of any type is needed including classroom, community room, or cafeteria. A large kitchen is ideal, either commercial or home-style are adequate. At the very least it is absolutely necessary to have access to a sink and soap for hand washing. Be sure to get advance permission to use the space for the intended cooking activities.

- **Cooking Equipment**: cutting boards, mixing bowls, colander, measuring cups and spoons, can opener, knives, pots, pans, pot holders, cooking utensils. If no kitchen is available, you may also need a hot plate, rice cooker, toaster oven, induction burner, or blender and extension cord(s).

- **Supplies**: food serving bowls or platters, serving spoons or tongs, paper plates, utensils, napkins, cups, food service gloves, dish soap, sponges, paper towels, hand sanitizers, surface cleaning products, and aluminum foil or sealable plastic bags for leftovers. It is also helpful to have an easel, easel paper, and markers or any large mark-able board to write out instructions. If the workshop leader will be traveling long distances with perishable foods, a cooler and ice or ice packs should be used to keep food cold and safe.

- **Food**: including all ingredients for recipes as well as beverages for attendees. Healthy beverage ideas include water, seltzer, or low-fat milk.

- **Storage Space**: for food, spices, condiments, supplies, and equipment that is clean and secure. Airtight containers and storage bins are helpful in keeping items organized and clean. All equipment must be properly cleaned and sanitized after each workshop and before being returned to storage.
Costs

Costs of running a workshop vary depending on resources and space available. The full list of items to price out includes: food, supplies, cooking equipment, storage space, space for the workshop, and travel expenses, as well as staff time to shop for food, set up, conduct the workshop, and clean up. A sample of how to calculate the costs is below. This assumes you are running a workshop for the first time, which includes a higher supplies cost to purchase everything you will need.

- Workshop space: donated or available at no cost: $0
- Cooking equipment: donated or borrowed: $0
- Food costs, which includes a taste for all attendees: $25-50*
- Supplies: $20
- Storage space: donated or already existing: $0
- Staff time to recruit participants: 10+ hours x hourly rate**
- Staff time to prepare and run workshop: 5 hours x hourly rate
- Mileage to purchase food and get to and from workshop: # miles x $ 0.55 per mile
- If applicable, staff work space and organization overhead
- Add up each line to calculate total cost

*Food donations can help reduce food costs; but additional staff time may be needed to solicit and acquire the donations.

**Involving volunteers can help reduce staff costs.
Setting up

Steps to setting up a well-organized and safe workshop include advance preparations and preparations upon arrival.

Advance preparations:

- Check how many servings the recipe makes. You may have to adjust the recipe to serve the correct amount.
- Write a shopping list for ingredients and make sure you have the correct supplies and cooking equipment.
- Obtain low-cost supplies. Shop the sales for the best deals. Develop a relationship with your local grocery store manager. He or she may be able to give food or supplies at a discount.
- Become familiar with the space you will be working with and make any necessary adjustments. For example, if a kitchen is small, preparation stations can be set up on a sanitized or covered table in another room while the kitchen is used only for washing vegetables, cooking, and clean up. Once preparations are complete, the table can be used for discussion and tasting.
- Write all tasks to be completed on easel paper so the participants will be able to see how all the tasks come together to make a recipe. See Appendix C for tasks related to the recipes in this guide. You can modify these as needed.
- Write or type and print recipe tasks on paper to be cut into individual tasks and placed at each station (see picture).
- Bring a printed recipe for each participant, sign in sheet, name tags, pens or pencils, and survey (if collecting demographic, outcome, or satisfaction data).

Preparations upon arrival:

Arrive at least 30 minutes in advance to allow for set up time which includes:

- Set up tables and chairs in a way conducive to running the workshop.
- Locate trash receptacle nearby for waste.
- Sanitize all tables and/or counter surfaces.
- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Set up paper goods and beverages.
- Rinse produce so it is ready to be used.
• Set up ingredient stations: the way we run a cooking workshop is to divide up the steps of making a recipe into individual stations so each participant can volunteer for one or two tasks. This way, all contribute in an organized way and everyone knows what part they play in making the recipe come together. Set up each ingredient station with ingredients, equipment, and pre-cut individual task description sheets. At each station place the needed ingredients, measuring cup, knife, cutting board, bowl, foodservice gloves, and corresponding recipe task (see picture).

• For potentially hazardous equipment: ensure knives and hot plates are set up safely, away from table or counter edges, and at an appropriate height for the safety of all participants. Secure electrical cords to the floor with tape or position them to run behind a table. Locate cooking areas next to outlets whenever possible.

• As participants arrive, welcome each new arrival, introduce yourself, ask each to fill out name tags and sign in on attendance sheet if applicable.
**Food and Cooking Safety**

It is crucial to practice good food safety habits during workshops to prevent foodborne illness (also called food poisoning). Be sure to follow these steps to ensure that your participants leave just as healthy as when they arrived.

**Food Safety**

Follow good food safety guidelines in the following areas: clean, separate, cook, and chill.

1. **Clean**
   - Surfaces: bacteria and viruses can be spread through dirty surfaces. To prevent this, wash all table, counter, and sink surfaces with a sanitizing cleaner. Ensure all cooking supplies are clean prior to use. Sponges can carry a lot of bacteria, so it’s a good idea to bring a new, clean sponge to each workshop.
   - Hands: wash hands before and after handling raw food. Use soap and warm water and scrub the hands, being sure to get under the nails and up to the wrists, for 20 seconds (the time it takes to sing “Happy Birthday” twice).
   - Produce: rinse fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running water before eating.

2. **Separate**
   - Keep raw meats, fish, poultry, and eggs away from ready-to-eat foods. Ensure that their juices do not drip onto other foods in the grocery cart and refrigerator.
   - Use one cutting board for raw meat, fish, and poultry and another for fruits and vegetables.
   - Use separate plates and utensils for raw and cooked meat, fish, and poultry.
   - Wash hands after handling raw meats.

3. **Cook**
   - Raw and undercooked meat, fish, poultry, and eggs can harbor harmful bacteria that can make participants sick. A food thermometer is the best way to tell if a food is cooked to proper temperature. Here are safe minimal internal temperatures for commonly consumed foods:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Temperature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beef and pork (steak, roasts, chops)</td>
<td>145°F. Allow to rest for three minutes before eating to complete cooking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs and egg dishes</td>
<td>160°F. Cook until whites and yolks are both firm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>145°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground beef or pork</td>
<td>160°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry (whole, ground, and parts)</td>
<td>165°F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Chill

- Keep refrigerators under 40°F and freezers under 0°F.
- Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator, in the microwave, or under cool running water and not on the counter.
- Do not leave food in the “danger zone” (40-140°F) for more than two hours total. Put groceries in the refrigerator immediately, and refrigerate leftovers as soon as possible.

For more information about food safety, see the Additional Resources section in Appendix F.

Local Health Department Regulations

Before running a cooking workshop, we strongly urge you to check with your local health department to ensure that you are following their food safety protocols. The health department may require that the workshop leader is ServSafe® Certified. ServSafe® certification includes in-person or online instruction on how to minimize the risks of biological, chemical, and food allergen contamination as well as foodborne illnesses. Certification requires passing an examination.

Cooking Safety

Here are some knife, stove, and food allergy safety tips to ensure a safe workshop for all.

- Practice good knife safety. Teach participants proper cutting techniques.
  - Always hold and pass knives by the handle.
  - Carry and put knives down safely.
  - Never try to catch a falling knife.
  - Keep knives sharp to cut effectively.
  - Consider purchasing cut-proof stainless steel mesh cutting gloves (if your budget allows) to prevent accidents.

- Be very careful of stove safety.
  - Keep pot holders and towels away from the stove.
  - Keep pot/pan handles turned in.
  - Never leave food cooking unattended.
  - Always keep young children away from stove area especially when there are hot liquids and oil.

- Be aware of food allergies. Always ask at the beginning of each workshop whether anyone has a food allergy. If so, practice safety measure to ensure that the participant does not consume that allergen. When possible, avoid using the most common allergens: peanuts, tree nuts, soy, milk, eggs, wheat, fish, and shellfish.
**CHNA 18 Grant Support**

This work has been funded by a three-year grant from Community Health Network Area (CHNA) 18 (chna18.org). We were granted $10,000 per year for three years to be shared among our organizations. Collaboration was a key ingredient, and providing time for collaborative relationships to develop was part of the goal of this funding. The value of having three years of funding cannot be overemphasized. We’d like to thank CHNA 18 for supporting this project.

**Organization Descriptions**

Healthy Waltham (HW) is Waltham’s healthy communities collaborative, and as such, works with human service organizations, city government, schools, local businesses, and local universities to promote health among Waltham residents. HW is also the coordinator of Waltham’s Mass in Motion initiative and Let’s Move Waltham. Both Mass in Motion and Let’s Move aim to decrease the rates of obesity related chronic diseases in the community. Visit [www.healthy-waltham.org](http://www.healthy-waltham.org) for more information.

Jewish Family & Children’s Service (JF&CS) cares for individuals and families by providing exceptional human service and health care programs, guided by Jewish traditions of social responsibility, compassion, and respect for all members of the community. A caring presence in the 100 communities we serve, we’re proud to be the place that new mothers, young families, people with disabilities, fragile elders, and the chronically poor can turn to for vital and personalized services. Included in these services is Nutrition Services, which empowers people to improve their health by learning how to shop for and prepare healthy and affordable meals. Visit [www.jfcsboston.org](http://www.jfcsboston.org) for more information.

Waltham Fields Community Farm (the Farm) is a nonprofit farming organization committed to food access and education. Its existence as one of the few urban farms located within ten miles of Boston makes it an important resource, with organic vegetable production and hunger relief initiatives at the core of its work. The ability to obtain enough food and the right types of foods for an active, healthy life is the most basic of human needs that the Farm strives to fulfill, with many efforts operating in collaboration with others. Visit [www.communityfarms.org](http://www.communityfarms.org) for more information.
Appendix A: Lesson Plans

All lesson plans in this guide:

- Can stand alone or be part of a series.
- Include suggested questions to ask during lessons to stimulate conversation.
- Include approximate time to complete (~60-90 minutes) and can be pared down to meet allotted time.
- Include the objective of the lesson, the outline, the link to free handouts, and additional resources.
Lesson 1: Healthy Meals with Choose MyPlate

For this Lesson:

Objective

Participants will learn how to build healthy and balanced meals using the Choose MyPlate food guide.

Introduction

Introduce yourself to participants. Ask names of participants, as well as what brought them to the workshop today. Discuss today’s objective and plan for the workshop.

Discussion

ASK What have you heard about “MyPlate”? Explain the background of MyPlate:

- Released by the US Department of Agriculture in 2010, and is based on the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Replaces the former food guide pyramids.
- MyPlate illustrates the five food groups using a familiar mealtime visual, a place setting.
- The purpose of MyPlate is to encourage Americans to eat a healthy diet in order to achieve or maintain a healthy weight, promote health, and prevent chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes.

Handouts:


Additional Resources:

- Choose MyPlate: [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

Optional Materials:

- Food Models (order from [www.enasco.com/nutrition/](http://www.enasco.com/nutrition/))
1. Explain the basics of MyPlate using handout and optional MyPlate poster and food models.

MyPlate recommends filling your plate with:

- ½ fruits and vegetables
- ¼ whole grains
- ¼ lean proteins
- And including dairy and oils while reducing sources of empty calories

2. Make ½ your plate fruits and vegetables

ASK *Why is it important to eat enough fruits and vegetables?*

- Fruits and vegetables provide many important nutrients and healthy plant chemicals that help decrease the risk of heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and some cancers.
- When eaten whole, they are high in water and fiber. The water is hydrating. The fiber helps digestion, lowers cholesterol, and keeps blood sugars even. Together in a whole fruit or vegetable, the water plus fiber help you feel full at a meal or snack.

ASK *What types of fruits count?*

- Any fruit or 100% fruit juice counts as part of the Fruit Group. Fruits may be fresh, canned, frozen, or dried, and may be whole, cut-up, juiced, or pureed.
- Included are whole fruits, berries, and melon. ASK *what are your favorites?*
- For a healthy weight, it is recommended to focus on eating whole fruit. Whole fruit has water plus fiber so it is filling; dried fruit has fruit sugar and fiber but no water for a higher calorie food; and juice is recommended at no more than four ounces per day because it has the fruit sugar and no fiber.

ASK *What types of vegetables count?*

- Any vegetable or 100% vegetable juice counts as a part of the Vegetable Group. Vegetables may be raw or cooked; fresh, frozen, canned, or dried/dehydrated; and may be whole, cut-up, or mashed.
- Included are non-starchy vegetables, starchy vegetables, and beans and peas. Non starchy vegetables are higher in water and lower in starch than starchy vegetables, beans, and peas, and are therefore lower in calories and more filling.
- In general for a healthy weight, it is recommended to focus on non-starchy vegetables to fill ½ the plate; starchy vegetables can count as a whole grain, and beans and peas can count as a protein source.
- Vegetables of similar colors generally have similar nutrients, such as orange or red vegetables (carrots and red peppers), which are a good source of Vitamin A.
3. Make ¼ of your plate whole grains

- Any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley, or another cereal grain is a grain product. Starchy vegetables have as much energy from carbohydrate as grains so can also be used as a grain in any meal. These carbohydrate-containing foods give us instant energy.

- Grains can either be refined or whole. It is recommended to make at least half of your grains whole grains.

**ASK Why choose whole grains?**

- “Because they are delicious” – Mark Bittman in the NY Times, July 2013

- Whole grains are high in fiber, vitamins, and healthy plant chemicals. They can help lower cholesterol, help with digestion, and may help with weight management.

- Examples of whole grains include whole wheat pasta, whole grain bread, oats, whole grain cereal, and brown rice. **ASK What are your favorites?**

**ASK Which vegetables are starchy?**

- Peas, potatoes, sweet potatoes, corn, and winter squash (butternut, acorn, spaghetti squash, pumpkin).

4. Make ¼ of your plate lean protein

**ASK Why are protein foods important at meals?**

- Muscles, organs, hair, skin, and nails are all made of protein.

- Protein we eat keeps us feeling fuller for a longer period of time after a meal, and helps stabilize blood sugars.

**ASK What are examples of protein foods?**

- Meats, poultry, seafood, beans, peas, eggs, soy products, nuts and seeds all count as protein foods.

- It is recommended to choose leaner (lower fat) meats and poultry, such as poultry without the skin, loin cuts of meat, seafood, and vegetarian sources for optimal heart health and lower calorie options.
5. Include dairy (or non-dairy substitute)

*ASK Why are dairy foods important?*

- Dairy products provide the calcium and vitamin D that help build strong bones and teeth. They can also be a good source of protein at a meal.
- It is recommended to have three servings of dairy per day to meet calcium and vitamin D needs.
- The dairy group includes milk, cheese, yogurt, and calcium-fortified dairy alternatives (such as soy milk).
- It is recommended to choose nonfat or low fat dairy products to reduce artery-clogging saturated fat and calories.

6. Include oils

- Oils are fats that are liquid at room temperature, like the vegetable oils used in cooking. Oils come from many different plants and from fish. Oils are NOT a food group, but they provide essential nutrients and are important for good health. Therefore, oils are included in USDA food patterns.
- Sources of oil include oils used in cooking, sauces and dressings, and foods that are high in oils including certain fish, avocado, and nuts and seeds.

7. Review key takeaways from the lesson. *ASK: What is one thing you learned today? What might you do differently based on what you learned?*

- Fill half the plate with fruits and vegetables.
- Fill ¼ of the plate with lean protein.
- Fill ¼ of the plate with whole grains.
- Include dairy (or non-dairy substitute).
- Include oils.
Lesson 2: Healthy Eating on a Budget

Handouts

- Choose MyPlate Eating Better on a Budget handout:  
- Optional: Unit Price handout (see Appendix D)

For more information

- 101+ Ways to Save Food Dollars:  
- Choose MyPlate Healthy Eating on a Budget Resources:  
  http://www.choosemyplate.gov/healthy-eating-on-budget.html
- Environmental Working Group Good Food on a Tight Budget:  
- Shelf life of foods: www.stilltasty.com/

Optional Materials

- Food Models (order at www.enasco.com/nutrition/)
- Food packages:
  - Canned fruit packed in water or 100% juice
  - No added salt or low sodium canned vegetables
  - Similar foods of different types with price tags for unit price comparison (e.g. two different size packages of the same food or two different brands of the same food)

Objective

Participants will learn tips for eating healthy on a budget.

Introduction

Introduce yourself to participants. Ask names of participants, as well as what brought them to the workshop today. Discuss today’s objective and plan for the workshop.

Explain For most people food is the third-largest monthly expense after housing and transportation. The average American household spends 13% of the household budget on food.

People who use a food budget can cut their food costs by up to 20%. For example, a family who usually spends $500 per month on groceries can cut their bill to $400 per month.

Discussion

1. Save money on groceries.

ASK What do you do to save money on food?  
Listen for participant ideas. Explain that there are a few tips and tools that can be helpful for eating healthy on a budget, which we will discuss today. Examples include:

- Create a grocery list.
- Buy in bulk.
- Use the unit price.
- Use coupons.
**ASK Why is it helpful to create a grocery list?**
- Planning meals ahead and creating a grocery list helps you to only buy the items you need at the store.
- You can use grocery store circulars to determine what is on sale for the week and create a grocery list.

**ASK What do you use coupons for when you shop?**
- Coupons often can be a great resource if they are for products you already purchase; however, they may lead you to buy things you wouldn’t normally buy and then spend more money.
- Focus on coupons that are geared toward foods made from whole ingredients, such as canned or frozen fruits or vegetables, whole grains, or lean proteins (poultry, fish, beans and legumes, nuts and seeds).

**ASK Are there any strategies that you follow at the grocery store to find less expensive items?**
- Shop the perimeter of the grocery store. Typically the healthier items (fruits, vegetables, dairy, and meats) are found in the outer aisles, while more processed foods are found in the inner aisles.
- More expensive items are usually at eye level. The less expensive items are usually found on lower or higher shelves.
- Get more bang for your nutritional buck. Desserts, sugary beverages, and chips are usually not cheap and add money to your grocery budget while providing few health benefits.
- Choose lower-cost foods. **ASK What foods do you know that are more affordable?**
  - Plan some meals using beans ($0.20 per ½ cup) or eggs ($0.22 per egg) instead of meat ($~0.30 per ounce).
  - Opt for bananas or apples instead of berries and melons.
  - Pick broccoli and carrots rather than leafy greens.
- Do the prep work yourself. Pre-washed and pre-chopped foods can be a convenience but if you have the time, doing the work yourself will usually save money.

**ASK Do you compare prices when you shop? Have you ever used the unit price?**
- The “unit price” can be used to find the lowest price items. It can be found on the shelf tag under the grocery item, and is usually the per pound or per ounce price.

  **Presenter note: draw the following for participants and highlight where the unit price can be found.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food name</th>
<th>Container Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit Price</td>
<td>Container Price</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The unit price can be used to compare different brands of the same food, different sizes of products, and different types of the same food (for example canned, frozen, and fresh produce).
• One downside to using the unit price is that it does not factor in the edible portion of the food so it can be challenging to compare produce items. For example, if you buy skinless, boneless chicken breast for $4.69 per pound, the chicken is 100%. If you purchase a whole chicken for $1.49 per pound, you do not eat the bones, therefore ~50% of the chicken is not edible.

Sometimes the largest package is the best bargain, and sometimes it isn’t. **ASK When wouldn’t you want to buy the largest package?**

• If the largest package will spoil or go stale before you have the opportunity to eat it.
• If the large packages may not fit in your cabinets.
• If the large packages is too heavy to carry.
• If you don’t have the money available to pay for the larger package.

**ASK Do you ever purchase store brands?**

• The store brand is usually less expensive than the name brand because the grocery spends less money on marketing. For example, a 15.5-ounce can of store brand black beans costs $0.69, as compared with $0.89 for the name brand.
• Often store brand foods and name brand foods contain the same ingredients, but you may want to read the food label to compare products. For example, store brand yogurt often contains additional nonfat milk solids or other thickeners that name brands do not contain, making the carbohydrate and calorie content higher. For 8 ounces (1 cup) of yogurt:
  - Stop & Shop Nonfat Plain Yogurt contains 130 calories, 18 grams carbohydrate
  - Dannon Nonfat Plain Yogurt contains 105 calories, 16 grams carbohydrate

2. Save money on fruits and vegetables by choosing fresh, frozen, or canned.

*Note* this is a review from Lesson 2

**ASK Are canned and frozen fruits and vegetables as healthy as fresh?**

• Fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables are all great options. Many people prefer fresh fruits and vegetables, but they can be the most expensive option and actually may lose a little nutrition while they are being transported from the farm where they were grown.
• Canned and frozen produce are preserved at their peak ripeness, and thus maintain the greatest nutrient value. They are also a great option year-round, when certain kinds of fresh produce may not be available.

**ASK What are the recommendations for purchasing canned fruits and vegetables?**

• Choose canned vegetables that are low sodium or have no salt added to limit sodium.
• Choose canned fruits in juice or water rather than in syrup to avoid added sugar.
**ASK What does it mean to buy produce that is “in season”?**

- Most fruits and vegetables have a peak growing season. Produce that is “in season” is typically less expensive than produce out of season. For example, you may pay $2 less for a box of strawberries in June than you do in January. They will also taste better, and may not have to travel as far to reach your grocery store.
- You can freeze produce when it is in season and less expensive for use later in the year. Frozen tomatoes are easy to use in a pasta sauce, and frozen berries taste great on top of cereal.

3. Reduce waste at home.

Almost one-third of the food in the US is thrown away, equaling $48 billion each year! One way to save money on food is to eat more of what you buy.

**ASK How do you try to decrease waste at home?**

- Plan a grocery list. Only buy what you’ll need for the week.
- Cook in large batches and freeze them. Soups and casseroles freeze well.
- Shop more frequently to avoid spoilage.
- Use leftovers.

**ASK How do you use leftovers?**

- Use vegetables and meats in soups and casseroles.
- Use meats in sandwiches and salads.
- Eat vegetables in omelets and sandwiches.

**Presenter note:** Don’t forget about food safety! Poultry and meats typically are only safe to eat for up to 3-4 days after they are originally cooked. Freezing foods can keep them safer for longer. Most meats are safe for up to 3 months in the freezer.

4. Review key takeaways. **ASK What is one thing you learned today? What might you do differently based on what you learned?**

- Save money on groceries.
- Save money on fruits and vegetables by choosing fresh, frozen, or canned.
- Reduce waste at home.
Lesson 3: Eating More Fruits & Vegetables on a Budget

Objective

Participants will learn how to incorporate more fruits and vegetables into meals and snacks while eating on a limited budget.

Introduction

Introduce yourself to participants. Ask names of participants, as well as what brought them to the workshop today. Discuss today’s objective and plan for the workshop.

Explain: Most Americans do not meet their fruit and vegetable needs. Today we will talk about how to incorporate more fruits and vegetables into our diet while keeping within a limited food budget.

Discussion

1. The importance of fruits and vegetables.

   *Ask: Why are fruits and vegetables important for health?*

   Fruits and vegetables are low in calories and provide many important vitamins, minerals, and healthy plant chemicals that help decrease the risk of heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and some cancers. They are also high in fiber, which helps prevent constipation, lowers cholesterol, keeps blood sugar in control, and keeps you feeling full.

2. All fruits and vegetables count.

   *Note: this is a review from Lesson #1*

   *Ask: What types of fruits count?*

   Any fruit or 100% fruit juice counts as part of the fruit group. Fruits may be fresh, canned, frozen, or dried, and may be whole, cut-up, juiced, or pureed. Choose canned fruits in juice or water rather than in syrup.

   *Ask: What are your favorite fruits? Prompt: piece of fruit, berries, and melons*
**ASK What types of vegetables count?**

- Any vegetable or 100% vegetable juice counts as a part of the Vegetable Group. Vegetables may be raw or cooked; fresh, frozen, canned, or dried/dehydrated; and may be whole, cut-up, or mashed.

- Included are non-starchy vegetables, starchy vegetables, and beans and peas. Non-starchy vegetables are higher in water and lower in starch than starchy vegetables, beans, and peas, and are therefore lower in calories and more filling.

- In general for a healthy weight, it is recommended to focus on non-starchy vegetables; starchy vegetables can count as a whole grain, and beans and peas can count as a protein source at a meal.

- Vegetables of similar colors generally have similar nutrients. For example, orange vegetables (carrots and orange peppers) are a good source of Vitamin A.

**ASK What are your favorite vegetables? Prompt: Dark green leafy, green, orange/red, white, and purple**

**ASK What is the MyPlate recommendation for how to fill our plate with fruits and vegetables?**

Make ½ your plate fruits and vegetables.

3. Choose fresh, frozen, or canned fruits and vegetables.

**ASK What are the recommendations for fruit consumption? (Show using food models)**

- Adults need approximately 1½ to 2 cups of fruit, depending on age, sex, and level of physical activity. One cup of canned, frozen, or fresh fruit or ¼ cup of dried fruit can be considered as one cup from the Fruit Group. A large piece of fruit typically provides one cup of fruit.

- For a healthy weight, it is recommended to focus on eating whole fruit. Whole fruit has water plus fiber so it is filling; dried fruit has fruit sugar and fiber but no water for a higher calorie food; and juice is recommended at no more than four ounces per day because it has the fruit sugar and no fiber.

- It is recommended to limit juice to 4 fluid ounces (½ cup) per day, because it is higher in calories per cup than fresh fruit, and lower in fiber (which makes it less filling). For example, every 8 ounce cup of juice is the equivalent of eating 2 pieces of fruit. It is easy to drink more juice than it is to eat whole fruit. Choose 100% juice to avoid added sugar. If you drink vegetable juice, opt for low sodium.
What are the recommendations for vegetable consumption? (Show using food models)

- Adults need approximately 2½ to 3 cups of vegetables per day, depending on age, sex, and level of physical activity.

- One cup of raw or cooked vegetables or two cups of raw leafy greens can be considered as one cup from the Vegetable Group. Vegetables may be raw or cooked; fresh, frozen, canned, or dried/dehydrated; and may be whole, cut-up, or mashed. We count starchy vegetables as grains because they have as much energy from carbohydrate as grains so can also be used as a grain in any meal. These carbohydrate-containing foods give us instant energy.

Which vegetables are starchy?

Peas, potatoes, sweet potatoes, corn, and winter squash (butternut, acorn, spaghetti squash, and pumpkin).

Are canned and frozen fruits and vegetables as healthy as fresh?

Fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables are as healthy as fresh. Many people prefer fresh fruits and vegetables, but they can be the most expensive option and actually may lose a little nutrition while they are being transported from the farm to the store. Canned and frozen produce are preserved at peak ripeness, and thus maintain excellent nutrient value. They are also a great option year-round, when certain kinds of fresh produce may not be available.

What are the recommendations for purchasing canned fruits and vegetables?

- Choose canned vegetables that are low sodium or have no salt added to limit sodium.
- Choose canned fruits in juice or water rather than in syrup to avoid added sugar.

4. Save money on fruits and vegetables.

How can you cut costs when buying fruits and vegetables?

- Purchase canned and frozen goods.

- Purchase fruits and vegetables that give you the biggest bang for your buck.

- Fruits include: apricots, bananas, cantaloupe, grapefruit, honeydew, kiwi, nectarines, papaya, pears, starfruit, tangerines, and watermelon.

- Vegetables include: broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, chayote squash, collards, corn (frozen), eggplant, green onion, kale, lettuce and mixed salad greens, mustard greens, okra, onions, potatoes, snow peas, spinach, tomatoes (canned low sodium), turnip greens, pumpkin, carrots, sweet potatoes, and zucchini and other summer squashes.

- Only buy what you think you will use before it spoils. Buying produce in bulk only saves you money if it doesn’t end up in the trash!
• Do the prep work yourself. Stores usually charge more for prepared fruits and vegetables. This can be a great convenience but if you have the time, washing, peeling, and chopping produce yourself will save money.

  ASK What types of produce do you like to buy already prepared? Prompt: prewashed lettuce, chopped vegetables

• Eat fruits and vegetables as snacks instead of traditional snack foods, such as chips or cookies that can actually be pricier. Fruits and vegetables provide greater nutritional bang for your buck.

  ASK What are some examples of snacks containing fruits and vegetables?
  o Piece of fruit
  o Yogurt and fruit
  o Carrots and hummus
  o Banana and peanut butter
  o Apple and cheese
  o Ants on a log (celery with peanut butter and raisins)
  o Cereal and fruit

• Stock up on sale items – especially canned and frozen produce.

• Buy produce that is in season. Many fruits and vegetables are available locally at a lower cost during their peak growing season. You can freeze produce when it is in season and less expensive for use later in the year. Frozen tomatoes are easy to use in a pasta sauce, and frozen berries taste great on top of cereal.

• Look for deals at a farmers’ market. Often you can find produce at farmers’ markets that is less expensive than at the grocery store, and since it is fresher, it will stay fresh longer. Many farmers’ markets now accept SNAP EBT (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Electronic Benefits Transfer) cards. ASK Have you ever shopped at a farmers’ market? What foods do you buy?

4. Incorporate more fruits and vegetables into your meal plan.

  ASK How can you incorporate more fruits and vegetables into your meals and snacks?
  • Vegetable omelet or frittata
  • Salad as main meal or side
  • Side of fruit or vegetable with a meal
  • Add vegetables to sandwich or wrap
**ASK How do you use extra produce?**

- Use leftover vegetables in soups, casseroles, or pasta dishes.
- Use fruit in salads and rice dishes.
- Use overripe fruit for baking, smoothies, or mixed with yogurt. Certain fruits even taste great roasted (such as apples) or grilled (like peaches).

5. Review key takeaways

**ASK: What is one thing you learned today? What might you do differently based on what you learned?**

- All fruits and vegetables count.
- Eat fresh, frozen, or canned fruits and vegetables.
- Eat more fruits and vegetables while sticking to your food budget.
- Incorporate more fruits and vegetables into your meal plan.
Appendix B: Additional Resources for Workshops

Cooking with children and family meals:

- Exposing children to the cooking process and to new foods is a great way to encourage them to be healthy eaters for life. For an article about cooking with children and tasting new foods, visit: http://www.healthy-waltham.org/eat-your-veggies-with-a-napkin/

- Family dinners are also a great way to model healthy eating behaviors and for connecting with children. For an article on the importance of family dinners, visit: http://www.healthy-waltham.org/food-memories-and-family-dinners/

Food allergies:
- Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network: www.foodallergy.org

Food safety:
- FightBac: www.fightbac.org
- Handwashing: www.cdc.gov/handwashing
- Iowa State University food safety lesson plans: www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsafety/lesson/lessons.html
- Safe cutting gloves: http://www.webstaurantstore.com/search/cutting+gloves.html?gclid=CIPMyZrEk7UCFQ-f4AodInEAWA.

Grant writing resources:
- Associated Grant Makers http://www.agmconnect.org/
- Food Research and Action Center: www.frac.org
- Local community foundations and charities
- Philanthropy News Digest: http://foundationcenter.org/pnd/rfp/
- US Department of Agriculture: www.usda.gov

Recipes, low cost and healthy:
- Choose MyPlate: www.choosemyplate.gov/healthy-eating-tips/sample-menus-recipes/recipes.pdf
- JF&CS Nutrition Services: www.jfcsboston.org/recipes
Sources of produce:

- Find out if you have one or more farmers’ markets or Community Supported Agriculture programs (CSAs) in your area and approach the participating farms. Vendors are often willing to donate produce at the end of their distribution days.
- Each state has a Department of Agriculture that can be helpful in identifying nearby farms and offering grant programs connecting consumers to farm fresh foods.
- Each state also has one or more universities or other institutions receiving federal and state funds to offer agricultural extension services to support local farms. The extension personnel working in these institutions can provide a wealth of resources for making farm connections and garnering funding to support your project.
## Appendix C: Workshop Checklist

Below is the list of items you will generally need for each workshop. The materials that are needed will depend on the lesson and the recipe.

### Equipment
- Hot plate
- Extension cord
- 2 pot holders
- 1 large stock pot with lid
- 1-2 large sauté pans
- 2-3 small mixing bowls
- 2-3 large mixing bowls
- Colander
- 3-4 chef’s knives
- 1 small/paring knife
- 3-4 cutting boards
- Mixing spoon
- 1-2 serving spoons
- Spatula
- Set of measuring spoons
- Set of dry measuring cups
- 1-2 liquid measuring cups
- Can opener
- Whisk
- Masher
- Garlic press
- 1-2 vegetable peelers
- Mesh cutting gloves

### Groceries (recipe dependent)
- Oil
- Herbs/spices
- Condiments
- Beverages for participants
- Fresh produce
- Canned goods
- Other ________________________

### Handouts & Other Materials
- Handouts
- Recipes
- Attendance sheet
- Registration forms
- Surveys
- Pencils/pens
- Name tags
- Markers
- Easel
- Easel paper
- Recipe task sheets

### Paper Goods
- Antibacterial wipes
- Disposable utensils
- Disposable plates/bowls
- Napkins
- Cups
- Food safe latex-free gloves
- Paper towels
- Hand soap
- Foil or plastic bags for leftovers
- Sponge
- Dish soap

### Optional
- Food models
- Food packages
Appendix D: Recipes

The recipes included in this guide are:

- Breakfast Burrito
- Beef & Vegetable Chili
- Fiesta Pinwheels
Breakfast Burrito

Yield: 4 servings, 1 burrito each
Total time: 30 minutes

Ingredients
2 tsp canola or olive oil
½ small red onion, diced
1 green or red bell pepper, seeded and diced
1 cup drained, rinsed low-sodium canned black beans
1 large tomato, seeded and diced
¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper
Black pepper, to taste
4 eggs and 4 egg whites or 6 whole eggs, whisked
1/3 cup shredded reduced fat pepper Jack cheese
4 (10-inch) whole-wheat tortillas
¼ cup fat free Greek yogurt or sour cream
¼ cup salsa
1 small avocado, cubed (optional)
hot sauce, to taste (optional)

Preparation Instructions
1. Preheat oven or toaster oven to 350°F.
2. Heat the oil in a large non-stick skillet over medium high heat. Add onions and bell peppers and cook until softened, about 8 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, wrap tortillas in foil and place in oven. Heat until warmed through, for about 7 minutes.
4. Add black beans, tomatoes, crushed red pepper, and black pepper to skillet and cook until beans are warmed, about 3 minutes.
5. Reduce heat to medium-low. Add eggs and shredded cheese to skillet with vegetables and beans. Scramble eggs, stirring frequently, until eggs are cooked and no longer runny, about 3 minutes.
6. Place one tortilla on each plate. Spread 1 tablespoon of Greek yogurt on tortilla. Top each tortilla with ¼ of skillet mixture and 1 tablespoon each of salsa. If desired, top with ¼ each of avocado and season with hot sauce.
7. Roll up into burrito and serve.

Nutrition Analysis
Per serving: 350 calories; 13g fat (3.5g saturated; 0g trans); 195mg cholesterol; 650mg sodium; 38g carbohydrate (7g fiber, 6g sugar); 20g protein. Vitamin A 35%, Vitamin C 80%, Calcium 15%, Iron 20% Daily Values.

Cost
Per serving: $1.31
Total ingredient cost: $23.45

Adapted from: www.foodnetwork.com
Beef and Vegetable Chili

Yield: 4 servings, 1½ cups each  
Total Time: 45 minutes

Ingredients
- ½ cup dry or instant brown rice  
- 1/3 lb 90% lean ground beef or turkey  
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced  
- 2 green or red bell peppers, diced  
- 2 carrots, diced  
- 1 15.5 oz can kidney beans, drained & rinsed  
- 1 14.5 oz can low sodium diced tomatoes  
- 2 8-oz cans low sodium tomato sauce  

Seasonings:
- 1 clove garlic, minced  
- ½ tbsp chili powder  
- ¼ tsp black pepper  
- 1/8 tsp salt  
- 1 tsp cumin  

Or seasonings of your choice

Preparation Instructions
1. Cook rice according to package directions.
2. Brown meat in a large pot over medium heat. Drain fat drippings by using a spoon to hold the meat in the pan and tilting the pan until the fat drains out of one side.
3. Add onions to pot and cook until transparent.
4. Add the remaining ingredients (peppers, carrots, beans, diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, and seasonings) and mix.
5. Simmer on medium-low, stirring occasionally for 15 minutes or until vegetables are cooked to desired softness.
6. Place ½ cup brown rice in each bowl. Serve chili over rice.

Nutrition Analysis
Per Serving: 440 calories; 6g fat (2g saturated, 0g trans); 25mg cholesterol; 430mg sodium; 75g carbohydrate (13g fiber; 13g sugar); 21g protein.  
Vitamin A 35%; Vitamin C 130%; Calcium 8%; Iron 25% Daily Value.

Tips
For a lower-cost or vegetarian version, replace beef with an additional can of drained & rinsed beans – choose your favorite type.

Cost
Per serving: $2.49*  
For all ingredients: $27.36

*This recipe saves you money by using a mixture of beans and beef, rather than just beef. As a result, this recipe costs $2.49 per serving instead of $3.18 per serving for an all-meat chili, saving you $2.76 for four servings!
Fiesta Pinwheels

Yield: 4 servings  
Total Time: 15 minutes

Ingredients
- ½ cup canned low sodium fat free refried beans*  
- 4 10-inch whole wheat tortillas  
- 1 small tomato, diced  
- ½ cup drained, canned, no-salt-added corn  
- ½ cup shredded cabbage  
- ¼ cup chopped green onion  
- ½ avocado, mashed  
- ¼ cup shredded reduced fat sharp cheddar cheese (optional)  
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro (optional)  
- ¼ cup Tbsp fat free sour cream or fat free plain Greek yogurt  
- ¼ cup Tbsp salsa

Preparation Instructions
1. Spread two tablespoons of the beans onto each tortilla.  
2. Sprinkle two tablespoons of tomato, corn, cabbage, and green onion on top of beans. If desired, add cheese and cilantro.  
3. Mix mashed avocado, sour cream or yogurt, and salsa. Spread ¼ cup of mixture onto each tortilla.  
4. Roll up tortilla and slice into one-inch pinwheels or serve whole.

Nutrition Analysis
Per serving: 250 calories; 6g fat (0g saturated, 0g trans); 0mg cholesterol; 440mg sodium; 40g carbohydrate (6g fiber, 4g sugar); 8g protein. Vitamin A 6%, Vitamin C 45%, Calcium 6%, Iron 10% Daily Value.

Cost
- Per serving: $1.93  
- Total ingredient cost: $15.33

* Low sodium canned black beans can be substituted for refried beans. Rinse them to decrease sodium (salt) even further, and mash with a fork.

Adapted from: www.diabetes.org
Appendix E: Recipe Task Sheets

The recipe task sheets below are meant to be printed, cut into strips, and placed at the ingredient stations. You can adjust the number of servings by doubling or tripling the recipe ingredients.
Recipe: Breakfast Burrito (4 meal-size servings)

1. Dice \( \frac{1}{2} \) of a small red onion.

2. Seed and dice 1 bell pepper.

3. Open can of beans. Rinse and drain. Measure 1 cup.
4. Measure ¼ tsp chili flakes.

5. Crack 8 eggs into bowl. Separate out and remove 4 yolks.

6. Measure 1/3 cup shredded cheese. Add to bowl with eggs and whisk.
7. Seed and dice large tomato.
8. Heat 2 tsp canola oil in a large nonstick skillet over a medium-high heat. Cook the onions and peppers until onions are softened and peppers are slightly charred, about 8 minutes.
9. Add black beans and red pepper flakes and cook until warmed through, another 3 minutes. Season with pepper and transfer to a dish.
10. Place a drop of canola oil on a paper towel, then use to coat the skillet. Reheat the skillet over a medium heat. Reduce heat to low and add eggs, scrambling until cooked through, about 3 minutes.
11. Spread each tortilla with 1 Tbsp each Greek yogurt and salsa, then layer with \( \frac{1}{4} \) of the black bean mixture, \( \frac{1}{4} \) of the scrambled eggs, some diced tomato, and \( \frac{1}{4} \) of the avocado (if using). If desired, season with hot sauce. Roll up burrito-style and serve.
Recipe: Beef and Vegetable Chili (4 meal-size servings)

1. Cook rice according to package directions.

2. Dice 1 onion.

3. Dice 2 peppers.

4. Peel and dice 2 carrots.
5. Drain and rinse beans.

6. Open cans tomatoes and tomato sauce.

7. Mince 1 clove garlic.

8. Measure $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp chili powder.
9. Measure 1/4 tsp pepper.

10. Measure 1/8 tsp salt.

11. Measure 1 tsp cumin.
12. Brown meat in a large pot over medium heat. Drain fat drippings by using a spoon to hold the meat in the pan and tilting the pan until the fat drains out of one side.
13. Add onions to pot and cook until transparent.

14. Add the peppers, carrots, beans, diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, garlic, chili powder, pepper, salt, and cumin to pot and mix.
15. Simmer on medium-low, stirring occasionally for 15 minutes or until vegetables are cooked to desired softness. Serve over rice.
Recipe: Fiesta Pinwheels (4 meal-size portions)

1. Open can of beans.

2. Dice ¼ cup of tomatoes.

3. Open can of corn. Drain.

4. Chop 2 cups of cabbage into shreds.
5. Chop \( \frac{1}{4} \) cup of green onions.

6. Chop \( \frac{1}{4} \) cup of cilantro.

7. Cut and mash avocado. Measure \( \frac{1}{2} \) cup.
8. Measure \( \frac{1}{4} \) cup yogurt and place in bowl with avocado.

9. Measure \( \frac{1}{2} \) cup salsa and place in bowl with yogurt and avocado. Mix avocado, yogurt, and salsa.
10. Assemble tortillas. On each tortilla:
• Spread 2 Tbsp beans
• Sprinkle 2 Tbsp tomato
• Sprinkle 2 Tbsp corn
• Sprinkle ½ cup cabbage
• Sprinkle 1 Tbsp green onion
• Sprinkle 1 Tbsp cheese
• Sprinkle 1 Tbsp cilantro
• Spread ¼ cup of avocado/yogurt/salsa mixture on top of tortilla fillings
11. Roll up tortilla. Slice into ½-inch pinwheels.
Appendix F: Handouts

The handouts included in this guide are:
- Choose MyPlate *What’s on Your Plate*
- Using the Unit Price
- Choose MyPlate *Eating Better on a Budget*
- Choose MyPlate *Smart Shopping for Veggies and Fruits*
What’s on your plate?

Before you eat, think about what and how much food goes on your plate or in your cup or bowl. Over the day, include foods from all food groups: vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, and lean protein foods.

Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
Make at least half your grains whole.
Switch to skim or 1% milk.
Vary your protein food choices.

Choose MyPlate.gov
Cut back on sodium and empty calories from solid fats and added sugars

Look out for salt (sodium) in foods you buy. Compare sodium in foods and choose those with a lower number.

Drink water instead of sugary drinks. Eat sugary desserts less often.

Make foods that are high in solid fats—such as cakes, cookies, ice cream, pizza, cheese, sausages, and hot dogs—occasional choices, not every day foods.

Limit empty calories to less than 260 per day, based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

Be physically active your way

Pick activities you like and do each for at least 10 minutes at a time. Every bit adds up, and health benefits increase as you spend more time being active.

Children and adolescents: get 60 minutes or more a day.

Adults: get 2 hours and 30 minutes or more a week of activity that requires moderate effort, such as brisk walking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vegetables</th>
<th>Fruits</th>
<th>Grains</th>
<th>Dairy</th>
<th>Protein Foods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eat more red, orange, and dark-green veggies like tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and broccoli in main dishes. Add beans or peas to salads (kidney or chickpeas), soups (split peas or lentils), and side dishes (pinto or baked beans), or serve as a main dish. Fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables all count. Choose “reduced sodium” or “no-salt-added” canned veggies.</td>
<td>Use fruits as snacks, salads, and desserts. At breakfast, top your cereal with bananas or strawberries; add blueberries to pancakes. Buy fruits that are dried, frozen, and canned (in water or 100% juice), as well as fresh fruits. Select 100% fruit juice when choosing juices.</td>
<td>Substitute whole-grain choices for refined-grain breads, bagels, rolls, breakfast cereals, crackers, rice, and pasta. Check the ingredients list on product labels for the words “whole” or “whole grain” before the grain ingredient name. Choose products that name a whole grain first on the ingredients list.</td>
<td>Choose skim (fat-free) or 1% (low-fat) milk. They have the same amount of calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk, but less fat and calories. Top fruit salads and baked potatoes with low-fat yogurt. If you are lactose intolerant, try lactose-free milk or fortified soymilk (soy beverage).</td>
<td>Eat a variety of foods from the protein food group each week, such as seafood, beans and peas, and nuts as well as lean meats, poultry, and eggs. Twice a week, make seafood the protein on your plate. Choose lean meats and ground beef that are at least 90% lean. Trim or drain fat from meat and remove skin from poultry to cut fat and calories.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For a 2,000-calorie daily food plan, you need the amounts below from each food group. To find amounts personalized for you, go to ChooseMyPlate.gov.

**Eat 2½ cups every day**
What counts as a cup?
1 cup of raw or cooked vegetables or vegetable juice; 2 cups of leafy salad greens

**Eat 2 cups every day**
What counts as a cup?
1 cup of raw or cooked fruit or 100% fruit juice; ½ cup dried fruit

**Eat 6 ounces every day**
What counts as an ounce?
1 slice of bread; 1 cup of cooked rice, cereal, or pasta; 1 ounce of ready-to-eat cereal

**Get 3 cups every day**
What counts as a cup?
1 cup of milk, yogurt, or fortified soymilk; ½ ounces natural or 2 ounces processed cheese

**Eat 5½ ounces every day**
What counts as an ounce?
1 ounce of lean meat, poultry, or fish; 1 egg; 1 Tbsp peanut butter; ½ ounce nuts or seeds; ¾ cup beans or peas
**Using the Unit Price**

Use the **Unit Price** to buy more food per dollar.

**Unit Price** is:  
Cost per Weight or  
Cost per Measure  
$ per pound ($/lb)  
$ per gallon ($/gal)  
$ per ounce ($/oz)  
$ per liter ($/L)

Find the **Unit Price** on store shelves:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Name</th>
<th>Container Size</th>
<th>Unit Price</th>
<th>Container Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green Beans</td>
<td>14.5 oz</td>
<td>$.07/oz</td>
<td>$1.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use **Unit Price** to find low cost foods at the store:

1. **Different Size Containers**

   **Brand X Peanut Butter**  
   18 oz  
   Unit Price: $.16/oz  
   Container Price: $2.90

   **Brand X Peanut Butter**  
   28 oz  
   Unit Price: $.15/oz  
   Container Price: $4.20

   **Large Containers**
   Pros (+):  
   More food per dollar  
   Feed large family for less $  
   Cons (-):  
   Higher container price  
   Need more storage space  
   Heavy packages  
   Must eat food before it spoils

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# Using the Unit Price

## 2. Different Brands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand X Peanut Butter</th>
<th>Brand Y Peanut Butter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 oz</td>
<td>18 oz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$.16/oz</td>
<td>$.11/oz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2.90</td>
<td>$1.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Save $ with Store Brands**
- Usually costs less
- Usually taste the same
- Often made of the same ingredients

## 3. Different Types of the Same Food

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fresh</th>
<th>Frozen</th>
<th>Canned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green Beans 2 pounds (lb)</td>
<td>Frozen Green Beans 2 lb bag</td>
<td>Canned Green Beans 14.5 oz can (about 1 lb)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1.99/lb</td>
<td>$.72/lb</td>
<td>$.07/oz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3.98</td>
<td>$1.44</td>
<td>$1.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conversions:**
- 1 pound = 16 ounces
- $.72/lb ÷ 16 oz/lb = $.04/oz
- Unit Price for Frozen Green Beans = $.72/lb and $.04/oz

*Source of peanut butter jar graphic: University of Illinois Extension, Mary Connors, 2001*
eating better on a budget

10 tips to help you stretch your food dollars

Get the most for your food budget! There are many ways to save money on the foods that you eat. The three main steps are planning before you shop, purchasing the items at the best price, and preparing meals that stretch your food dollars.

1 plan, plan, plan!
Before you head to the grocery store, plan your meals for the week. Include meals like stews, casseroles, or stir-fries, which “stretch” expensive items into more portions. Check to see what foods you already have and make a list for what you need to buy.

2 get the best price
Check the local newspaper, online, and at the store for sales and coupons. Ask about a loyalty card for extra savings at stores where you shop. Look for specials or sales on meat and seafood—often the most expensive items on your list.

3 compare and contrast
Locate the “Unit Price” on the shelf directly below the product. Use it to compare different brands and different sizes of the same brand to determine which is more economical.

4 buy in bulk
It is almost always cheaper to buy foods in bulk. Smart choices are family packs of chicken, steak, or fish and larger bags of potatoes and frozen vegetables. Before you shop, remember to check if you have enough freezer space.

5 buy in season
Buying fruits and vegetables in season can lower the cost and add to the freshness! If you are not going to use them all right away, buy some that still need time to ripen.

6 convenience costs...
go back to the basics
Convenience foods like frozen dinners, pre-cut vegetables, and instant rice, oatmeal, or grits will cost you more than if you were to make them from scratch. Take the time to prepare your own—and save!

7 easy on your wallet
Certain foods are typically low-cost options all year round. Try beans for a less expensive protein food. For vegetables, buy carrots, greens, or potatoes. As for fruits, apples and bananas are good choices.

8 cook once...eat all week!
Prepare a large batch of favorite recipes on your day off (double or triple the recipe). Freeze in individual containers. Use them throughout the week and you won’t have to spend money on take-out meals.

9 get your creative juices flowing
Spice up your leftovers—use them in new ways. For example, try leftover chicken in a stir-fry or over a garden salad, or to make chicken chili. Remember, throwing away food is throwing away your money!

10 eating out
Restaurants can be expensive. Save money by getting the early bird special, going out for lunch instead of dinner, or looking for “2 for 1” deals. Stick to water instead of ordering other beverages, which add to the bill.

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smart shopping for veggies and fruits

It is possible to fit vegetables and fruits into any budget. Making nutritious choices does not have to hurt your wallet. Getting enough of these foods promotes health and can reduce your risk of certain diseases. There are many low-cost ways to meet your fruit and vegetable needs.

1. celebrate the season
Use fresh vegetables and fruits that are in season. They are easy to get, have more flavor, and are usually less expensive. Your local farmer’s market is a great source of seasonal produce.

2. why pay full price?
Check the local newspaper, online, and at the store for sales, coupons, and specials that will cut food costs. Often, you can get more for less by visiting larger grocery stores (discount grocers if available).

3. stick to your list
Plan out your meals ahead of time and make a grocery list. You will save money by buying only what you need. Don’t shop when you’re hungry. Shopping after eating will make it easier to pass on the tempting snack foods. You’ll have more of your food budget for vegetables and fruits.

4. try canned or frozen
Compare the price and the number of servings from fresh, canned, and frozen forms of the same veggie or fruit. Canned and frozen items may be less expensive than fresh. For canned items, choose fruit canned in 100% fruit juice and vegetables with "low sodium" or "no salt added" on the label.

5. buy small amounts frequently
Some fresh vegetables and fruits don’t last long. Buy small amounts more often to ensure you can eat the foods without throwing any away.

6. buy in bulk when items are on sale
For fresh vegetables or fruits you use often, a large size bag is the better buy. Canned or frozen fruits or vegetables can be bought in large quantities when they are on sale, since they last much longer.

7. store brands = savings
Opt for store brands when possible. You will get the same or similar product for a cheaper price. If your grocery store has a membership card, sign up for even more savings.

8. keep it simple
Buy vegetables and fruits in their simplest form. Pre-cut, pre-washed, ready-to-eat, and processed foods are convenient, but often cost much more than when purchased in their basic forms.

9. plant your own
Start a garden—in the yard or a pot on the deck—for fresh, inexpensive, flavorful additions to meals. Herbs, cucumbers, peppers, or tomatoes are good options for beginners. Browse through a local library or online for more information on starting a garden.

10. plan and cook smart
Prepare and freeze vegetable soups, stews, or other dishes in advance. This saves time and money. Add leftover vegetables to casseroles or blend them to make soup. Overripe fruit is great for smoothies or baking.

Go to www.ChooseMyPlate.gov for more information.