

Healthy Eating: Smart Ways to Save Money



What is healthy eating?

Healthy eating starts with learning new ways to eat, such as adding more fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and cutting back on foods that have a lot of fat, salt, and sugar. It also means eating a variety of foods and not eating too much or too little of any food.

Healthy eating is not a diet. It means making changes you can live with and enjoy for the rest of your life.

How does healthy eating help you?

Healthy eating will help you get the right balance of vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients. It will help you feel your best and have plenty of energy.

Healthy eating is one of the best things you can do to prevent health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure.

What if you're on a budget?

Healthy eating works with any budget. And a little meal planning might save you money.

Save money by planning

- Plan and shop for a week's worth of meals at a time. You're more likely to stay home and eat if the ingredients are already in your kitchen.
- Keep a list of what leftovers are in your refrigerator and freezer. The leftovers won't go to waste and you can use them when you're planning next week's meals.
- Watch grocery store ads for sales on foods that you use a lot. For example, think of five foods you use on a regular basis, and stock up on them when you can buy them for less.

Save money by learning

- Learn how much food costs. Then you can tell when an advertised sale is really a good deal.
- Learn to compare prices by the ounce, or "price per ounce." Sometimes the largest container isn't the best price. Some stores give you the per-ounce price. Or use a pocket calculator to figure out this price.
- Learn how to grow your own vegetables. If you don't have the space, see if there is a community garden in your neighborhood. Or try growing a few vegetables or herbs on your porch or in a sunny indoor room.
- Collect, organize, and use coupons.
- Make healthy foods at home. For example, pop corn at home instead of buying potato chips.

Save money at the grocery store

- Shopping with family members can cost you money if they talk you into buying things that aren't on your list. Shop by yourself if you have to.
- Buy fruits and vegetables when they're in season. They are likely to be fresher and cost less.

- Buy frozen vegetables. They are picked at the peak of ripeness and have just as many—or more—vitamins and minerals as fresh. And they cost less.
- Buy store brands instead of name brands.
- Shop in the bulk foods aisle, where beans, rice, pasta, and other dried foods may be cheaper.

Save money in your kitchen

- Build up your cooking skills. Buy one good, general cookbook. Look for cookbooks at used bookstores.
- Invest in a slow cooker. With a slow cooker you can buy less expensive cuts of meat, because the long, slow cooking time makes them tender. Adding vegetables and beans can make the meal go farther.
- Learn how to cut up a chicken. You can save money by buying whole chickens and cutting them apart. And make soup with the bones.

- Make your own lunch, and take it with you to work.
- Use recipes you can double or triple, so you can freeze leftovers for later.

Save money elsewhere

- Whole-grain bread is healthier than regular bread, but it usually costs more. If you have a bakery outlet in your community, you can buy day-old whole-grain bread there at a discount.
- Buy fresh produce at a farmer's market or a produce stand. Prices are often lower there than at the grocery store.
- Many fruit orchards let customers pick the fruit themselves to save money.