



How to Eat Healthy on An Unhealthy Student Budget

5 Important Tips:

- 1) Plan Meals Ahead
- 2) Don't go grocery shopping hungry
- 3) Buy no-name brand products
- 4) Don't be fooled by convenience packaged foods
- 5) Eat a wide variety

Other random pointers:

- Make healthy choices a priority
- Plan your meals, and then make a list (buy only what is on the list)
- Plan with a balanced diet in mind (components of your meal from each of the food groups)
- Search flyers for coupons
- Give yourself so much food money for the month, withdraw it in cash, and only spend with your cash!
- Buy only the amount you need for a few days, this not only forces you to not over buy- but it cuts down on waste
- Don't one stop shop- SHOP AROUND and COMPARE PRICES! Give yourself time at the grocery store to really shop, and look at various options
- Examine the bottom and top shelves at the store- marketers put the more expensive choices at eye level.

Food Helpers:

- Drink lots of water!
- Limit buying snack food and pop
- Make extra to freeze or eat as leftovers (the cost of one meal, is better if it can stretch into a few meals)
- Buying in bulk is usually cheaper, and then you can freeze it!
- Make things from scratch (you pay the price for conveniently packaged goods)
- Be creative with using soups, pasta and rice
- Use less expensive cut meats, and put them in a slow cooker, casserole or a marinade

- Buy frozen juice that you add water to, avoid carton juice
 - Fill your plastic drink containers, avoid buying individual juice boxes
- Pack a breakfast or lunch- buying on the run adds up to a mighty cost over time (Baking a dozen muffins, is cheaper than buying a muffin at \$1.75 at Starbucks everyday)
- Use your softer fruit for a morning smoothie

*A reasonable amount is to think of spending \$150-\$200/month/person on food

Nutritious Foods Don't Have To Be Expensive

(Excerpt retrieved from www.ualberta.ca/HealthInfo, Rev 2006)

You don't have to compromise nutrition when finances are tight. Use Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating as a tool to help get the best nutrition bang for your buck and to aid you in planning a balanced, nutritious diet. Here are some food group-specific tips to stretch your food dollar:

Saving Money on Grain Products

Best Buys: whole grain rice, macaroni, bread, rolled oats, and hot cereals

- Choose pasta made from whole grain or enriched flour.
- Plain pasta shapes like macaroni and spaghetti may be cheaper than fancy shapes.
- Buy from bakeries at the end of the day for discounts.
- Buy whole grain cereals instead of sugary ones. (Look for less than 5 grams of sugar and at least 2 grams of fiber.) They are more economical and nutritious.
- Avoid buying rice and pasta mixes. They are many times the cost of plain rice and pasta and are usually high in fat and salt.
- Long grain rice is half the cost of minute rice and only takes 15 more minutes to make. For even higher nutrient content, choose brown rice.

Saving Money on Vegetables & Fruit

Best Buys: apples, bananas, grapefruit, oranges, rhubarb, frozen juices (especially orange), potatoes, cabbage, carrots, plain frozen veggies, and canned tomatoes

- Buy fresh berries in season and freeze to enjoy at a later date.

- Buy fresh produce in amounts you can use before they go bad. Buy 5 carrots or 3 apples if that is all you need. If you buy a bag, split the contents between friends.
- Buy plain, bagged frozen vegetables instead of vegetables that are boxed and packaged with added sauces. They are much less expensive and are usually lower in fat and salt.
- Eat coleslaw more often. Cabbage is cheaper than lettuce and more nutritious.
- Pre-cut your own veggies. Keep them sealed in a container or zipper bag to prevent them from drying out.
- Remember that fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruits and vegetables are all nutritious. Choose which works best for your budget, taste and storage situation.
- Not all "juices" are created equal. Choose a juice that is labeled 100% fruit juice. Avoid beverages labeled "fruit drink", "fruit punch" or "fruit beverage". These products are high in sugar and contain very little fruit juice. The best buy is frozen orange juice concentrate.

Saving Money on Milk Products

Best Buys: skim milk powder, milk, evaporated milk, processed slices, cheddar cheese, mozzarella, and plain yogurt

- Skim milk powder is inexpensive (approximately half the cost of fluid milk), is easy to store, and is a good source of calcium and protein. Use skim milk powder for cooking and baking in sauces, puddings, casseroles, soups, hot cooked cereal, mashed potatoes, and pasta dishes. Mix 1/3 cup (75 ml) of milk powder plus 1 cup (250 ml) water to reconstitute and use in place of fluid milk.
- Choose "no-name" brand cheeses.
- Substitute evaporated milk for cream.
- Buy plain yogurt and add your favorite fruit to flavor it yourself.

Saving Money on Meats & Alternatives

Best Buys: peanut butter, dried/canned beans or lentils, eggs, hamburger, blade or rump roast, canned tuna, and utility grade chicken

- Meats can be the most expensive item in the food budget. Buy cheaper cuts of meat and marinate them or cook longer at a lower temperature.
- Use dried or canned beans and lentils more often. They are an economical substitute for meat, are lower in fat, and are a good source of fibre.
- Plain frozen fish is less expensive than fresh or battered fish

Nutritious Pantry Basics:

The following foods can be kept on hand for quick and easy meal solutions. Remember: buy only the foods that you use or have space to store.

- canned salmon, tuna, chicken
- canned or dried peas, beans, lentils
- canned fruit, dried fruit and raisins
 - peanut butter
 - canned tomatoes, corn
- pasta, rice and other grains
 - skim milk powder
- salt, pepper and other seasonings
 - bread, buns, bagels or pitas
 - apples, oranges or bananas
- potatoes, carrots, onions and cabbage
- sugar, syrup, jam, oil, vinegar

Nutritious Refrigerator Basics:

- eggs
- milk, cheese, yogurt
- margarine

Nutritious Freezer Basics:

- frozen fruit juice concentrates (especially orange juice)
- frozen vegetables, berries

Finally, do not be afraid to be creative! Look up recipes in a book or online, mix ingredients together- and try new things!