
Family Health Centers Nutrition Program

FOOD BUDGETING

Balancing family and work activities with eating healthy while on a financial or time budget can be challenging. Listed below are some hints to help manage the process.

Prepare Meals from Scratch

it's healthier and costs less, but does take more time initially
cook in large quantities; use extras for left-overs, brown bagging and making your own microwave meals: soup, pasta and sauce, rice, beans, grains, greens...

Be a Smart Shopper

avoid purchasing processed, packaged convenience foods - they are more costly and have added sugar, salt, preservatives, additives, colorings, dyes...

buy foods, especially staples, in bulk; split w/another family or freeze extras.

buy fresh fruits and vegetables in season and what's locally available; go to food co-ops, fruit stands, farmer's and tailgate markets (If you want cantaloupe in January, you're going to pay the extra cost.)

clip coupons, look for items on sale (check expiration dates)

when food shopping, use a list and stick to it - don't go grocery shopping hungry!

Plan Ahead(Saves time and money)

plan a week's meals and snacks ahead of time.

when it's time to shop, you'll know exactly what you need

when it's time to prepare meals, the food is in the house and you'll know what to prepare.

plan ahead for the busy days you know you won't have time to cook -

spend more time cooking on weekends and days off

Low Cost Healthy Food Items

grains: whole grain breads and cereals, rice, oats, bulghur, quinoa, millet, barley...

legumes: dried peas and beans or canned without fat

soybeans - texturized vegetable protein

peanuts, peanut butter

pasta (whole grain)

vegetables: cabbage, greens, potatoes, onions, carrots, garlic, beets...

: eggs

soup

popcorn

tea (black, green or herbal)