

Healthy Eating For Any Budget

Is eating healthy food going to cost me more money?

Eating healthy meals and snacks does not have to cost you more money. In fact, eating healthy can even save you money. Here are some ideas to help you eat healthy and save money.

Planning ahead

- Take the time to plan out your meals for the week and make a grocery list based on your plan. Having a plan and a list can keep you from buying more expensive, less nutritious foods on impulse.
- Check what food you already have in your kitchen so that you do not buy food that you do not need. Use grocery store flyers to plan your meals.
 - Hungry shoppers tend to buy more than they need, so eat before you go grocery shopping.



Shopping tips

- Store brands and generic brands (no name) usually cost less than brand name products, and they are the same quality.
- Try out apps like “Flipp” for price matching.
- Single portion items are more expensive than buying in bulk. For example, buying single serving cans of fruit, yogurt or pudding is more expensive than buying in bulk.
- Look at food items on the top and bottom shelves. The highest priced items are usually at eye-level.
- Many convenience foods cost more. To save money, try shredding your own cheese, cutting your own vegetables and fruit or adding water to frozen juice concentrate.
- Stock up on items, such as canned goods, when they go on sale. Be careful because “sale items”, such as end-of-aisle displays, are not always cheaper.
- 7 out of 10 purchases in a grocery store are unplanned. Foods bought on impulse are often expensive and unhealthy choices. So, follow your shopping list, and don't go shopping when you are hungry.



Meal suggestions

- Meat can be expensive, so try meatless protein alternatives such as eggs, tofu and peanut butter. Prepare some meals with nutritious, fibre-rich meat alternatives like beans, peas, lentils, nuts and seeds.
- Some examples of meatless meals are: bean burritos with salad, rice and bean casseroles with vegetables, vegetable and cheese omelets with whole grain toast and tofu vegetable stir fry with rice noodles.
- Use meat-stretching dishes like casseroles, soups and stews.
- Slow cookers are an excellent way to cook less expensive meat cuts so that they will be tender and have lots of flavour. Slow cookers also save you time and you can enjoy coming home to a hot meal.



How to get the most for your money when buying fruits and vegetables

- Fruits and vegetables are usually a cheaper choice when compared with prepared foods and convenience snacks. To get the best value, buy fruits and vegetables when they are in season. They will taste the best and cost the least.
- Consider shopping at discount grocery stores, such as Food Basics or No Frills, for good produce at better prices. Many produce items are half the price of regular grocery store prices.
- Join a community garden to get some activity and enjoy the freshest produce. If you live in North Hamilton, you can call 905-523-6611 to reach the North Hamilton Community Center, for more information about adult and children garden programs.
- Try out a Good Food Box program. It is a non-profit fresh fruit and vegetable distribution program, which makes fresh local produce more affordable and easy to get. Weekly food boxes are delivered to various locations for pick-up. Visit environmenthamilton.org/good_food_box for more information or call 905-523-7697.

Where to find help with food costs

- Join a Community Kitchen group. These groups come together to learn how to cook new recipes and then everyone gets to take a meal home.
 - If you urgently need help to provide food for your family, contact a local food bank. In Hamilton you can call FoodShare at 905-664-9065 and they will help you.
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Cost saving tips

Food Group	Less Expensive Choices	Expensive Choices
Vegetables & Fruit	<p>Canned or frozen vegetables/fruit are just as nutritious as fresh produce. When buying canned or frozen, look for items that have no added salt, sugar or in water instead of syrup.</p> <p>Frozen vegetables and fruit packaged in bags cost less than those in boxes.</p> <p>Fresh fruit and vegetables that are in season.</p>	<p>Out of season produce. Single portion servings.</p> <p>Boxed or canned vegetables (such as instant potatoes).</p>
Milk & Milk Products	<p>Try "no name" or store brand varieties. Buy milk in bags rather than cartons.</p> <p>Buy yogurt in large tubs. Buy cheese in larger blocks, and slice or grate it yourself.</p> <p>Use skim milk powder or evaporated milk in recipes like soups, puddings, baking, sauces and casseroles that call for milk.</p>	<p>Individual portions of yogurt and pudding.</p> <p>Pre-grated cheese.</p>
Grain Products	<p>Grain products can often be purchased in bulk. Try different varieties like bulgur, oats, brown rice and barley.</p> <p>Hot cereals such as oatmeal or cream of wheat are an inexpensive choice, rich in nutrients and fibre.</p> <p>Stock up on pasta when it's on special.</p>	<p>Instant rolled oats and ready to eat cereals.</p> <p>Single portion snacks such as granola bars, and rice krispie squares.</p>
Meat & Alternatives	<p>Try less expensive alternative protein sources such as dried beans, peas and lentils, eggs and peanut butter. Try beans out in soups, salads and casseroles.</p> <p>A whole chicken costs less than the pieces.</p> <p>Use cheaper cuts of meat such as stewing beef, and shoulder cuts. Marinate to add flavour and tenderness</p> <p>Whole grain bread crumbs, oatmeal, rice or pasta can help 'stretch' ground meat.</p>	<p>Roasts, steaks, lamb, shrimp, corned beef and canned meats.</p> <p>Skinless, boneless meats.</p>

Here is an easy and low cost slow cooker recipe

Favourite Chili (Adapted from Rival Crock Pot Owner's Guide)

19 oz can kidney beans
19 oz can black beans
28 oz can diced tomatoes
1 lb lean ground beef
1 green and red bell pepper, chopped
1 medium onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, crushed
2 tablespoons chili powder
1 teaspoon black pepper
1 teaspoon cumin (if desired)
1 teaspoon salt



1. Brown the ground beef in a frying pan. Drain off fat.
2. Put all the ingredients in a slow cooker in the order they are listed.
3. Stir once. Put the lid on and cook on low for 10 to 12 hours, or on high for 5 to 6 hours.