

# HEALTHY EATING ON A BUDGET

MODULE 2 • BALANCED LIFE • WHOLE-PERSON PROGRAM



Many often wonder why healthy food is more expensive. Well, if you're a smart shopper, it doesn't have to be.

If you're trying to improve your diet but don't want to spend a fortune, two of the best ways to save money on food are to shop smartly and reduce your food waste. How? you ask. Check out these tips for doing both.

# Shop Smart

## 1. Have a strategy

Spending less at the store really comes down to your shopping strategy. Do you make a list? Do you shop while hungry? Making a list and knowing what you plan to buy ahead of time means you're less likely to pick up things you don't need and can help keep your grocery bill down.

As part of your strategy, you might also consider prioritizing items that are more expensive – for example, maybe you prefer organic berries, but brand-name hair products aren't as important to you. By choosing more generic options for items like shampoo, you may be able to spring for the berries.

## 2. Be a mindful shopper

An important thing to remember is that grocery stores are businesses – they're designed to encourage customers to purchase more. Eye-catching displays at the end of aisles and brightly packaged snacks at the checkout counter are placed there because you're more likely to put them in your cart when they are.

Stores try to create pleasant environments – with cafes and even kids' play areas – to get shoppers to linger; the more time you spend in the store, the more money you're likely to spend.

Everything from store layout to aroma and lighting to music is working to put you in a good mood and make you more willing to buy items you didn't originally plan for.

As you shop, be mindful of your surroundings and how they might be encouraging you to purchase certain products. By being aware of how stores are set up, you're less likely to allow them to influence your shopping behavior.

### **3. Shop seasonally**

Be open to purchasing what's seasonal. In-season produce is typically less expensive. It's also often displayed first in the produce section, which makes it easy to find. Some items (like tomatoes) can be purchased when they're in season and canned for year-round use.

## **Reduce Food Waste**

### **1. Buy only what you need**

As you make your grocery list, keep your schedule in mind. Do you have a work event one evening and dinner with friends another? Take note of which meals you know you'll need to prepare and which meals you may not be home for.

A bit of planning can help you make sure you're not buying food that you won't have a chance to eat before it goes bad and needs to be tossed.

### **2. Embrace leftovers**

Leftovers may not sound glamorous, but having a ready-to-go meal can be a lifesaver when you get home from a long day. The trouble is leftovers often get pushed to the back of the fridge and don't end up being eaten at all – not only is this a waste of food, but it's a waste of money.

To avoid this, put leftovers in clear containers. If it's been a couple of days and you haven't had time to eat them, pop them in the freezer so they don't go bad. Then you can have them when you need them.

Jazz up your leftovers by adding fresh herbs or greens and adjusting the seasoning so they're just as good as when they were made fresh.

Healthy eating can be expensive, but a little planning and mindfulness can go a long way toward reducing your grocery costs.