

Nutrition Education Class: Grocery Shopping Strategies

Plan:

- Make a weekly menu and stick to your planned meals
 - Serve what your family likes
 - Find quick, easy recipes
 - Make a book of “go-to” healthy recipes
 - Find meals that stretch expensive foods (stew, casserole, stir-fry)
- Buy fruits and vegetables that are in season
 - Buying in season makes produce fresher and last longer
 - In season produce is usually cheaper
 - Buying canned or frozen fruits and vegetables may be cheaper than fresh
 - Choose fruit canned in 100% fruit juice
 - Choose vegetables with “low sodium” or “no added salt”
- Check what you already have that needs to be used
 - Add those items to your weekly menu first
- Make a list
 - Look over recipes to make sure you have all the ingredients needed at home or on your list
- Check your schedule and check the ads
 - Don’t rush through the grocery store. Find a time where you can compare prices and find the best deals
 - Clip coupons – most grocery stores double them up to \$1.00
 - If you don’t have time to clip coupons, be sure to sign up and use the free loyalty cards offered at most grocery stores

Purchase

- Grocery shop when you are full
- Stick to the list, and get priority foods first (fruit, vegetables, protein, milk)
- Buy store brands
 - Look at the top and bottom of shelves. Companies pay to have their expensive products put at eye level
- Compare unit prices for the best deal
 - Unit price tells you the cost/lb, qt, unit of volume of food
 - Posted on the shelf below the food item with the price tag
 - Compare costs of different brands and sizes
 - Can also compare fresh, canned, and frozen
- Purchase non-perishable foods in bulk and fresh items in small amounts frequently
- Buy in season
- Check expiration dates
- Convenience items usually cost more, pay for the food – not the convenience
 - Buy fruits and vegetables in their simplest form (not pre-cut, prewashed, ready-to-eat)

- Avoid buying items with empty calories: candy, chips, soda
- Good low cost foods:
 - Protein: beans (garbanzo, black beans, chickpeas)
 - Vegetables: carrots, greens, potatoes
 - Fruit: apples, bananas
- Pay attention at check out to make sure you get the right price, and that the cashier put in the right code
- Ask for rain checks for sale items that are out of stock
- Don't forget any items

Prepare

- Reduce your waste!
 - In 2004 studies showed the average family throws away 14% of their food (~\$600/year)
- Precook meals when you have time
- Double or triple recipes and freeze in individual portions
- Try meatless meals – add beans or peas
- Use your leftovers!