

## EATING WELL ON A BUDGET

With a little bit of planning you can feed yourself and your family with delicious and nutritious meals very economically. In fact, eating more economically can also be healthier as it relies less on processed foods and additives, and more on whole foods (unprocessed food in its natural state) where you control each ingredient that goes into the meals you eat.

Three important things to remember about eating on a budget:

- It is not hard
- Your meals will still taste great
- You'll probably eat healthier food

The average Canadian eats a fair amount of processed food in the form of convenience foods, prepared foods, and frozen dinners. These foods, in general, cost more to produce than unprocessed foods, and therefore, cost you more to purchase.

Whole foods such as fresh fruit and vegetables, dry beans, whole grains, and uncooked fish and meats are often more nutritious. As they have had little or no processing they often retain a higher level of vitamins and nutrients, without any added salt, fat, or sugar.

## RESOURCES

If you have more questions about eating on a budget, see your family doctor or, if available in your community, talk with a public health nurse or a registered dietitian.

The national organization, Dietitians of Canada, has a helpful web site that gives more information on general nutrition, recipes and menu planning: [www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca)

TEA	3.29
BUTTER	3.48
SPINACH	2.99
FRESH HUMMUS	4.36
APPLE JUICE	1.99

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PASTA	2.49
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FOREST HAM	4.71
S/SALMN FLLT	7.64
OREGONO HERB	1.59
5 @ 0.15	
MINI CROISSANTS	0.75
GRAPE TOMATOES	2.99
UB/ALMND 543	3.87
0.300kg @ 12.90/kg	
DRIED MANGOS	4.34 G
0.145kg @ 29.90/kg	
APRICOTS 613	1.59 2.89
0.325kg @ 4.90/8.90/kg	
LT CRM CHEES	4.25

Straight talk  
from your doctor

Provided by your physician and  
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promote better health in BC



Suite 115  
1665 West Broadway  
Vancouver, BC V6J 5A4  
[www.bcma.org](http://www.bcma.org)

11/04



## SHOPPING TIPS FROM THE FOUR FOODS GROUPS

Variety is one of the keys to healthy eating and it's easy to choose good tasting, inexpensive, and healthy foods. Make selections from each of the four food groups every day to meet the body's daily requirements. Each group has its own healthy and economical choices.

### Grain products

Grains such as bread, pasta, rolled oats, and whole grain rice are a healthy source of food energy and can be the most economical part of your menu. Choose whole grain products (like brown rice) more often for the increased fibre and mineral content and let them be the center of your meal.

- Rice and pasta that come with its own sauce or flavourings are more expensive than rice and pasta bought in their natural state and served with homemade sauces.
- Whole grain cereals are more nutritious and economical than those with added sugar.
- Buy from bakeries at the end of the day for discounts.
- Long grain rice is half the cost of minute rice and takes just a little bit longer to cook.

### Vegetables and fruit

Vegetables and fruit are usually rich in essential vitamins and nutrients like anti-oxidants. Choose dark green, bright yellow, and orange vegetables and fruit more often for the extra nutrients they provide. This food group should be a part of every meal. Apples, oranges, bananas, cabbage, and carrots are low cost choices.

- Buy fresh berries in season and freeze them for later.
- If you buy frozen vegetables, get plain, bagged, frozen vegetables instead of those that are boxed and packaged with added sauces.
- Try making coleslaw because cabbage is cheaper and more nutritious than lettuce.

### Dairy products

Dairy products are an important source of protein and calcium, which contributes to strong bones and teeth. Skim milk and plain yogurt are economical choices.

- Choose no-name brand cheeses.
- Skim milk powder is half the cost of regular milk and is easy to store. It can be used for sauces, casseroles, soups, mashed potatoes, and pasta dishes. Or use it to make milk to drink.

### Fish, meats, and meat alternatives

Fish, meats, and meat alternatives are important sources of protein, which help build and maintain muscles. Less expensive protein sources include peanut butter, dried beans, eggs, rump roast, and canned tuna.

- Meats are usually the most expensive food item. By purchasing cheaper cuts of meat and then marinating them or cooking them at a lower temperature for longer, your meat budget will go further.
- Utility grade poultry may be missing a wing or a leg but is otherwise fine.
- Use dried or canned beans and lentils as often as possible. They are an economical substitute for meat, are lower in fat, and a good source of fibre.
- Plain frozen fish is often less expensive than fresh fish.

For more information on the four food groups such as serving sizes, number of servings each day, and other healthy food choices, ask your doctor for a copy of Canada's Food Guide or check out Health Canada's Food Guide web site at: [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/nutrition/pube/foodguid/index.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/nutrition/pube/foodguid/index.html).

## PLAN AHEAD

Planning ahead is one of the keys to healthy, economical meals. Here are some tips to help you save money:

- Plan future meals a few days ahead of time. This will help you to save both time and money as it reduces extra trips to the grocery store and you can plan to use leftovers in future meals.
- Eat breakfast at home or bring food with you to eat during a morning break. The cost of buying coffee and baked goods adds up quickly if done regularly.
- Try to pack lunches and healthy economical snack foods to take to work or school. Fill plastic drink containers with juice from home instead of buying individual juice boxes.
- Limit how often you eat out. For celebrations or social events invite friends over to cook a meal together or hold a "pot luck" dinner.

## SHOP SMART

There are lots of different ways to save money at the grocery store. Here are a few tips:

- Use coupons where possible and make a shopping list. Buy only the foods you use and have the space to store.
- Don't go shopping on an empty stomach. You may give in to temptation and buy more than you need or cut your trip short resulting in a second trip back to the store.
- Buy from the bulk food bins when you can. They are often less expensive than packaged foods, plus you can choose the amount you want.
- Try to avoid convenience foods like frozen dinners or precooked deli foods, as they tend to be more expensive.
- Look for generic products, as they are often less expensive.
- Compare prices by the unit to get the best bargain, and avoid making purchases at convenience stores—that convenience will cost you plenty.