

Healthy Eating on a Budget

Healthy eating is possible, even when living on a limited budget.

Tips to Save Money

- Check the flyers for deals.
- Plan some meals, make a list of foods you will need.
- Search for money-saving apps including rebate and coupon apps.
- Try not to go grocery shopping on an empty stomach.
- Try to make foods from scratch rather than buying pre-made meals. Pre-made meals are more expensive and may have more fat, salt, and sugar.
- Buy the food you need from grocery stores and produce markets, but not convenience stores. Convenience stores are more expensive and usually do not have a lot of healthy foods.
- If possible, buy in bulk because it's often cheaper.
- Look for less expensive brands placed on higher or lower shelves. Store or generic brands are as healthy as the name brand.
- Use unit price to compare products.
- Buy meat, bread, cheese, fruit and vegetables on sale and freeze them.
- Plan to buy dry items you use often when they are on sale, such as pasta, rice, cereal, flour, etc.
- Choose hot cereals you cook yourself like rolled oats. Buy them in bulk. Instant cereals are more expensive and not as healthy.
- Buy fruits and vegetables in season. Pick berries and freeze them for later.
- Buy just enough vegetables and fruit for a few days to avoid spoilage
- Grow your own vegetables and fruits.
- Add lentils or beans (brown, kidney or white beans, etc.) to your meals. Beans have protein and can be eaten instead of meat.
- Buy a whole chicken and cut into pieces. Or try buying frozen non-battered chicken pieces. Hunt for your own meat and birds and freeze it for future meals.
- Try canned meats such as salmon, tuna, or sardines (packed in water).
- Tougher cuts of meat are often less expensive. Tenderize tougher cuts by marinating overnight, using moist cooking methods (like stewing, pot-roasting and braising), or by pounding it with a mallet before cooking.
- Use skim milk powder for baking.

794 mL can of whole tomatoes

540 mL can of whole tomatoes



The can of tomatoes with the lower unit price (20.2¢/ 100 mL) is the better deal.

Foods to keep in supply

Vegetables and Fruit

- pre-bagged potatoes, carrots, onions, apples, and oranges
- frozen or canned fruit or vegetables without added sauces
(Choose canned fruit packed in water or fruit juice, and rinse the salt off canned vegetables.)

Protein Foods

- ground lean beef, stewing meat, pork shoulder, brisket, cross rib, outside round, bottom or inside round, chicken legs, thighs and drumsticks
(These are all good value meats.)
- canned fish or poultry (packed in water)
(Limit canned meats that are high in fat and salt.)
- dried or canned lentils and beans such as brown beans, kidney beans or white beans
- peanut butter
- eggs
- meat and fish without sauce, stuffing, or breading
- wild meat, fish, and birds
- hard cheeses such as cheddar
(Grate your cheese and freeze it.)
- plain yogurt in large containers, rather than tubes or small cups
(Portion it out yourself.)

Whole Grains

- bread, buns, bannock, roti
(Buy day-old and freeze to last longer.)
- plain pasta, rice, and crackers
(Choose whole grain most often.)

Best-before versus Expiry Dates

Best-before date tells you how long an unopened product will keep its flavour and nutritional value when stored correctly. It does not indicate food safety. Once you open a product, how long it stays 'fresh' (the shelf life) can change.

Expiry date must appear on 5 types of products: baby formulas and other human milk substitutes, meal replacements, nutritional supplements, formulated liquid diets, and foods for use in a very low-energy diet. After the expiry date, the product might not have the same nutrient content listed on the label. Do not eat any product that is past its expiry date. Throw it away.

Can I eat products past the best-before date?

You can eat products after their best-before date. The product might have lost some of its freshness, taste, and/or nutritional value. Its texture might also have changed.

Never use your nose, eyes, or taste buds to judge the safety of food.

If in doubt, throw it out.

Adapted with permission from materials created by Prince Albert Grand Council and Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington (KFL&A) Public Health.