

SESSION 3: Shopping on Your Budget

In this session, participants will learn ways to save money when purchasing food. An educator will provide tips to help participants before going to the store, at the store and when at home. Participants will practice using grocery store circulars to identify sale items, coupons, and other ways to save money on healthy foods while reducing food waste. The group will discuss how to effectively use foods that are less expensive when purchased in bulk and share their personal shopping tips.

**The structure within this lesson is intended as a guide. Prompts and cues can be tailored to better fit instructor's personality or tone. This curriculum was developed prior to the release of the 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. It reflects the evidence, recommendations, and federal nutrition guidance available at the time.*

OBJECTIVES

After the session participants will be able to:

1. List three shopping tips that can help families buy more nutritious food for less money.
2. Describe how to use in-store shopping tools like circulars, unit prices, and coupons.
3. Name two ways to reduce food waste.

TIME

~70 minutes

Note: Total time may be dependent on facilitator and participant engagement.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Be sure to have enough copies of each of the participant handouts and other items.

If continued series:

- Have folders for returning participants.
- Ensure extra folders and materials/handouts from the previous sessions for new participants.

Trainer Materials:

1. Sign-in sheet
2. Pre and post surveys

Participant Handouts Included in Packet:

1. USDA *Grocery Shopping Handout*
2. USDA *Eat Right When Money's Tight Handout*
3. USDA *MyPlate Create a Grocery Game Plan Grocery List*
4. USDA *Start Simple with MyPlate Handout*
5. USDA *Easy Steps to Prevent Food Waste*
6. *CalFresh Healthy Living Unit Price Cards*
7. *Sample Weekly Meal Plan*
8. *Supermarket Circulars and Ads*
 - a. Note: Consider using circulars and ads from general and cultural grocery stores in the community.

9. *Home Activities* sheet
10. *Evaluation* sheet

Other Items:

1. For PA break: [CalFresh Healthy Living Shape of Yoga](#) Booklet or [Power Up in 10](#) Booklet
2. Name tags
3. Colored markers and/or crayons
4. Pens and/or pencils
5. Flip chart paper
6. Blue painter's tape
7. Large envelope for documents
8. Recipe and items for taste testing (*optional food demo*)

BEFORE TRAINING

Contact and invite a CalFresh Outreach Worker to attend session. Confirm their attendance.

Confirm your meeting location, date, and time.

Remind participants with a friendly call or email, whichever method works best for you and participants.

Make copies of the trainer materials and participant handouts.

Prepare the following flip chart paper:

1. Outline
2. Group Agreements
3. Flipchart paper: Before
4. Flipchart paper: During
5. Flipchart paper: After
6. Flipchart paper: "What tips can you share to help save money when buying groceries?"

TRAINING DAY

Set out the sign-in sheet and a pen.

Place name tags on table.

Post flip chart papers to wall.

Provide a table with chair for the CalFresh Outreach Worker, if one attends.

Place pens/pencils, paper, and other items on the tables.

Consider arranging tables/chairs in a U-shape to allow active participation.

Have music playing as participants arrive. (*optional*)

SESSION OUTLINE

Have Outline on flipchart paper and tape to wall/write on board.

1. Welcome & Training Introduction (2 min)
2. Group Agreements (3 min)
3. Pre-Survey (5 min)
4. Home Activity/Warm-Up (3 min)
5. Ice-breaker (5 min)
6. Activity 1 (15 min)
 - a. Part A: Before, During, After You Shop
 - b. Part B: Before You Shop
7. Activity 2: Search for Savings (10 min)
8. PA Break -Let's Stretch (3 min)
9. Activity 3: At the Store – Unit Pricing (10 min)
10. Activity 4: What To Do at Home After You Shop (5 min)
11. Home Activities (3 min)
12. Conclusion & Post Evaluation (2 min)
13. Closing

1. WELCOME & TRAINING INTRODUCTION

TIME: ~2 minutes

REMINDERS: Post agenda on the wall.

SAY: Hi, and welcome to Session 3: Shopping On Your Budget. Great to see you again. For those who are new, welcome, glad you are here.

During today's lesson, we will talk about ways to shop on a budget, save money on healthy foods and reduce food waste, and other tips to consider. We will also take a brief moment for a short physical activity break. We hope that the information and activities we share and do today are useful.

DO: Refer to posted agenda.

Thank you all for returning. Your participation is very important.

Before we begin, let's cover a few housekeeping items.

Please be sure to sign the sign-in sheet.

Please excuse yourself if you need to use the restroom or to take a call.

(Share instructions on where the restrooms are located, if needed.)

This session is approximately 70 minutes. Your active participation is appreciated.

ASK: Any questions?

2. GROUP AGREEMENTS

TIME: ~3 minutes

If continued series: Post Group Agreements flipchart paper from session one on the wall.

If single session, post groups agreements.

Ongoing Session:

SAY: You will notice that our Group Agreements are attached to the wall.

ASK: Are we still ok with these or are there others to add and/or remove?

Single Session:

SAY: Here is a list of group agreements. Group agreements allow us to create a safe and welcoming environment.

DO: Read aloud a few common group agreements and seek consensus. Ask if there are others to add.

1. Let's be respectful and have fun!
2. Agree to disagree. Don't yuck my yum!
3. Participate as much as you can – your voice matters.
4. Leave cell phone on vibrate and step outside if you need to make a call.

3. PRE-SURVEY

TIME: ~5 minutes

MATERIALS:

- **Pre-Survey** (optional)
- Pens
- Large envelope for documents

DO: Pass out the **Pre-Survey** and pens.

SAY: This is the **Pre-Survey**. Your participation is important and will help us find out if the lessons are effective. We will ask you to complete the form again at the end of the session.

Please answer the questions as best as you can.

Your name will only be used to match pre and post surveys, but your responses will remain confidential.

DO: Collect all forms when completed.

4. HOME ACTIVITY/WARM-UP

TIME: ~3 Minutes

NOTE: Do this if facilitating complete Nutrition 5 Series.

Skip if this session is a stand-alone session.

Getting familiar with your classmates:

SAY: Whether you had a chance to complete the home activities from last week or not, please turn to a partner and share with that person any successes and/or challenges you had with completing your home activities.

For those who are new, please share how you plan meals for the week.

DO: Provide handouts and resources from previous sessions to newcomers.

5. ICE-BREAKER

TIME: ~5 minutes

REMINDER: Post flipchart paper:

"What tips can you share to help save money when buying groceries?"

ASK: What tips can you share to help save money when buying groceries?

DO: Allow a few minutes for sharing.

SAY: Thank you everyone for sharing.

Let's begin.

6. ACTIVITY 1: PART A: BEFORE, DURING, AFTER YOU SHOP

TOTAL TIME:

~15 Minutes

PART A.:

~10 Minutes

MATERIALS:

- USDA *Grocery Shopping Handout*
- USDA *Eat Right When Money's Tight Handout*
- USDA *Start Simple with MyPlate handout*

SAY: Stretching your food dollars doesn't begin when you get to the store. To eat healthily on a budget and to avoid food shopping problems, it is important to consider what we do before, while, and after we shop.

It is important to consider creating balanced meals made up of the food groups.

DO: Hold up a copy of the MyPlate handout. Provide copies to participants, if needed.

SAY: Healthy changes can start at home and with what we put in our grocery cart.

For today's activities, we will move into three groups: Before you shop, while you shop, and after you shop.

DO: Be sure to have this on flipchart paper and posted throughout the room. Facilitators may have participants count off 1,2,3 OR just have participants to stay where they are to move into 3 groups.

DO: Pass out the USDA *Grocery Shopping Handout* and the USDA *Eat Right When Money's Tight Handout*.

SAY: Here is the USDA *Eat Right When Money's Tight Handout* with ideas. You may come up with others in your groups.

In your groups, please identify a note-taker and presenter. The note-taker will write down the group ideas on the flipchart paper. The presenter will share during the large group debrief. More than one person can share.

The task for each group is to come up with tips and tricks related to grocery shopping on a budget.

For example, the "Before you Shop" group may put on their list: Develop a shopping list before you head out to the store.

The following examples could be posted on each of the flipchart papers:

The "While you Shop" group may suggest to shop only at the perimeter of the grocery store so not to be tempted by food items in the aisles.

And the "After you Shop" group may suggest properly storing food items.

You are more than welcome to review the handouts for ideas and are encouraged to come up with other ideas to share.

DO: Allow time for teams to write their ideas on the flipchart paper.

SAY: Welcome back everyone. Let's start with the Before you Shop group. May be a good idea to take notes.

DO: Have each group present. Provide additional information, if available/needed.

SAY: Before we move on to the next activity about tips regarding Before you Shop, other considerations may also include:

1. Signing up for CalFresh as benefits may help to stretch your food dollar.
2. Using your benefits at the Farmers Market-getting a dollar-for-dollar match with your CalFresh benefits on fresh, local fruits and vegetables.
3. Using your benefits to purchase seeds/trees. Yes! You can use your CalFresh benefits to get seeds/trees. Plus, check out your local library as some libraries have a seed library. If not, may want to encourage them to start one. Starting or maintaining your home garden is certainly a good way to increase food access.

(If a CalFresh/Eligibility Worker is in attendance, say: Our guest today will provide additional information and answer any questions you may have regarding applying for and/or using your benefits.)

Thank you everyone, great ideas!

Let's continue the conversation about tips before, during, and after you shop—specifically with Before You Shop.

6. ACTIVITY 1: PART B: BEFORE YOU SHOP

PART B.:

~5 minutes

MATERIALS:

- *Create a Grocery Game Plan Grocery List*
- *Sample Weekly Meal Plan*

NOTE:

If continuing series, ask participants to pull out their weekly menu plan and have participants create a shopping list based on their menu plan.

If single session: Pass out and refer to Sample Menu Weekly Plan and Create a Grocery Game Plan Grocery List handout and ask participants to create a menu plan and shopping list.

Healthy eating is important at every age and can be done on a budget. Let's look at the USDA *Grocery Shopping Handout*.

DO: Allow class to look at the handouts.

SAY: Now let's take a closer look at tips we can use before we shop, when we are at the store, and when we get home.

DO: Address tips that did not come up during breakouts and highlight a few that did.

TIP 1: Check what you already have.

1. When starting your grocery list think about the MyPlate food groups.
2. Be sure to check out what's already in your refrigerator, freezer, and pantry.
3. Only shop for food you are out of or missing.

TIP 2: Plan your weekly meals.

1. Look at your meal plans from our last class. This plan will help you prepare healthy meals and snacks based on your food budget.
2. Try to write out the meals you want to make for an entire week.
3. Choose meals or recipes that use the foods and ingredients you already have and then decide what you need to buy.

TIP 3: Remember the basics.

1. Include more fruits and vegetables. They don't have to be part of your recipes. Use them as snacks or included in salads.
2. As we learned in our first lesson, all forms of fruits and vegetables count, fresh, canned, frozen, and dried.
3. Be sure to buy only what you can use before it spoils and becomes food waste.

TIP 4: Keep it organized for a quick visit - make a list.

1. Making a grocery list will help you stick to your plan.
2. Organize your list into groups like sections of the grocery store or into food groups. This helps to stay focused on only buying what you need and getting in and out of the store quickly.
3. As we just learned, when we don't buy more than we need, we prevent food waste and help to protect the environment.

SAY: Let's practice one of the Before You Shop tips by creating a shopping list. This shopping list will be based on your weekly menu plan. As discussed, it's important to stick to a list, especially as we may be able to save money as well as prevent food waste and help protect the environment.

Creating a Shopping List

SAY: To practice Before you Shop steps, developing a shopping list is important.

For this next activity, please look at the **Create a Grocery Game Plan Grocery List**.

DO: Pass out handouts; ensure everyone has a copy.

SAY: Using your **Create a Grocery Game Plan Grocery List** handout, please write 2 items on your shopping list and the amount of that item you will need based on your meal plan. Be sure to include enough for the whole week if you are using that food more than once. We will have an opportunity to share once done.

DO: Once everyone has completed that task, get everyone's attention. Ask for volunteers to share and capture information on whiteboard/flipchart paper.

1. What does your typical shopping for the week look like?
2. What is the dish? What are all the ingredients needed?
3. How many people will it feed? How long will it last?
4. How have you made sure your meals are based on MyPlate?

Once sharing is done, ask if there are other tips to stretch their food dollar/dishes that anyone would like to share. *(Capture on whiteboard/flipchart paper).*

TIP 5: Look Around for Savings.

1. Save more by using coupons (electronic or paper), signing up for store loyalty programs, and grocery store apps. Note: participants may have already addressed the following, but it is okay to reiterate.
2. Save even more by using coupons on sale items; ask the store if they match the competitor's coupons.
3. Look for specials and buy them on sale and in season.
4. Compare brands and prices. Store brands are usually less expensive.

7. ACTIVITY 2: SEARCH FOR SAVINGS

TIME: ~10 Minutes

MATERIALS:

- *Supermarket Circulars and Ads*
- *USDA Start Simple with MyPlate Handout*

ASK: Would someone like to share with the class where you shop and 2 reasons you like these stores (prices, selection, quality of produce, location, etc.)? Thank the class for their participation.

SAY: You can find items that are on sale by looking at the supermarket circulars and ads. Look at the store flyer you brought (*if advised in the previous class*) or the sample circulars we have provided. You can learn what fruits and vegetables are in season and at special prices.

As discussed, there may be coupons or "buy one get one free" and other special deals. Most grocery stores now offer digital coupons, circulars, and additional savings on their websites and phone apps. (*optional supporting activity, time permitting*).

ASK: For participants who have a phone, you can search for and get store apps for digital coupons. Many stores now have apps where you can look for specials on produce, coupons, and promotions.

DO: Walk through this process as it may be helpful to those with phones who may want to get the app on their own phone.

You just created a shopping list. To continue practicing Before you Shop steps:

1. Think about how much money you can spend, what foods you have on hand, what is on sale, and what sounds good.
2. Know how much money you must spend on food.
3. Take inventory of the foods you already have—check your refrigerator, freezer, and cupboards. This will keep you from buying food you don't need.
4. Plan your menus based around the foods you have.
5. Think of variety by including food from the five food groups, especially trying a new fruit or vegetable each week.
6. Look at store circulars/ads, coupons, sales, and store specials.
7. Are there items on sale that you can replace with an ingredient in your meal?

DO: Pass out the USDA *Start Simple with MyPlate Handout*

For this activity, we will use supermarket circulars to create a meal from your meal plan from Lesson 2.

Working alone or in groups, use the store circulars and refer to the *USDA Start Simple with MyPlate Handout* to create a dinner for a family of 4 that costs \$15 or less or \$3.75 per person.

ASK: Would anyone like to share their meal idea?

DO: Allow time for sharing.

SAY: Thank you, all. Let's move on to our Physical Activity Break.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BREAK

8. PA BREAK - LET'S STRETCH

TIME: ~3 minutes

MATERIALS:

- "Shape of Yoga" or "Power up in 10" booklet

SAY: Physical activity is important.

ASK: Who would like to lead us in a 3-minute physical activity, stretch, and/or breathing activity? We will be referring to a page from the "*Shape of Yoga*" or "*Power UP in 10*" booklets.

(If there are no volunteers, the facilitator can introduce and lead a PA break.)

SAY: Thank everyone for participating.

9. ACTIVITY 3: AT THE STORE – UNIT PRICING

TIME: ~10 Minutes

MATERIALS:

- USDA *Grocery Shopping Handout*
- *Unit Price Cards*

SAY: This next activity describes steps you may consider while grocery shopping.

The first thing to consider is to:

1. Compare Similar Products: Let's look at the *unit price cards 1, 2*. This information will help us learn which products may cost less at the grocery store.

DO: Pass out copies of the *Unit Price Cards* to each participant. Ensure participants have a copy of the USDA *Grocery Shopping Handout*.

SAY: What is the unit and retail price? And how can knowing these help me be a savvy shopper? Let's dive in.

The price tags on grocery store shelves have a lot of information.

They are called **Unit Prices**. The Unit Price can help us choose the best priced item.

The **Retail Price** is the price you pay for one single item.

The **Unit Price** is the cost of an item by its size or unit. This can be by the pound, ounce, quart, or another measurement. It can be very useful when comparing two items.

You can take a look at the handout or see here (*as you hold up the handout*).

The image on the back of the card shows 2 different price tags on a shelf. Based on the unit price, you can see the larger container is a better buy because you get more for your money.

As you can see, in example A, the unit price for the 6 oz yogurt is .12 cents with the total cost of .72 cents. The unit price in example B is .05 cents, and the total cost is \$1.62.

DO: Walk participants through the calculations on page 2 of the handout.

SAY: How is the Unit Price found?

TOTAL PRICE DIVIDED BY SIZE = UNIT PRICE

What is the unit price of a 6 oz. yogurt that has a retail price of of \$0.72?

$$\$0.72 \div 6 \text{ oz.} = \$0.12$$

- a. The unit price of this yogurt is \$0.12 per oz.
 - b. Which item is cost-effective? Meaning, which one gives you more bang for your buck?
2. **Buy in bulk:** You can save money by buying larger quantities of foods like whole grains, canned or dried beans, and frozen vegetables. Other savvy choices are family size or value packs of chicken, steak or fish and larger bags of potatoes. Don't overbuy foods that you will throw out later creating more food waste.
 3. **Buy canned:** When buying canned produce, choose vegetables with "low-sodium" or "no salt added" on the label; choose fruit in 100% fruit juice or light syrup. Canned produce lasts longer than fresh and it is a quick way to add fruits and vegetables to meals.
 4. **Buy frozen:** When buying frozen, choose vegetables without added sauces or butter and frozen fruit without added sugar. They are as good for you as fresh, last longer, and may cost less.

5. **Convenience costs:** Frozen dinners, pre-cut vegetables, instant rice, and instant oatmeal will cost more than if you make them yourself.
6. **Stretch your food dollars:** Certain foods are typically low-cost options all year round. Add beans and canned or frozen vegetables to bulk up your meals. Try eggs and canned fish for less expensive protein foods, carrots, cabbage, potatoes and canned tomatoes for vegetables, and apples, bananas, and oranges for fruit.
7. **Product placement:** Be aware of the placement of items in the store.
 - Look on lower shelves for better deals. Brand-name companies pay to have their products at eye level to get you to buy them. The same is true for the displays at end of aisles and checkout stand items. Think twice before buying if these items are not on your list.
 - Look at food product dating. This can help to reduce food waste.
 - Dates on foods are not an indicator of the product's safety and are not required by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)³.
 - With the exception of infant formula, if an "expired by", "use by" or "best before" date passes during home storage, a product should still be safe and wholesome if handled properly until the time spoilage is clear. Once you detect an off odor, flavor, or appearance, don't eat these foods and throw them away³.

10. ACTIVITY 4: WHAT TO DO AT HOME AFTER YOU SHOP

TIME: ~5 minutes

MATERIALS:

- *Easy Steps to Prevent Food Waste Handout*

ASK: What can we do at home after shopping to save time, money, and reduce food waste?

Let's discuss the remainder of the tips on our *Easy Steps to Prevent Food Waste handout*.

Following these recommendations may help families save up to \$1500 per year in food waste.⁴

1. To recap: **TIP 1:** Plan Ahead.
2. **TIP 2 -** Be sure to Serve Smart. Look at tip number 2. As it says, portion control supports good health and is good for reducing plate waste. Remember, throwing food out is throwing away the money you just spent on your groceries.
3. **TIP 3 -** Love your leftovers. Cooking in bulk or meal prepping is a great way to save time. Prepare enough of a single dish to eat multiple times during the week or freeze some to enjoy later. So, how do you love your leftovers?

4. **TIP 4** - Compost, don't trash. There are a few options to deal with food scraps.
- c. Some food scraps, like onion peels, carrot tops, celery pieces, etc. could be frozen and saved to make homemade stock.
 - d. Other food scraps can be regrown, like green onions, lettuce, bell peppers, and other vegetables, and maybe some seeds and/or pits of some fruits.
 - e. Another option is to set up a home compost bin. This can help enrich your home garden.
 - f. However, not every bit of food waste can be avoided. So, be sure to place into your organic or yard waste can (e.g., green can) for your weekly waste collection.

(Note, this may encourage participants to share their experiences with food scraps/waste.)

11. HOME ACTIVITIES

TIME: ~3 Minutes

MATERIALS:

- *Home Activity Sheet*
(Session Three)

DO: Pass out the Home Activity Sheet (Session Three) to each participant.

SAY: We will now go over the home activities for this week. Based on what you learned today, you are encouraged to add other activities.

12. CONCLUSION & POST-EVALUATION

TIME: 2 minutes

Reflection, Post Survey/Evaluation, and Conclusion

REMINDERS: Collect Sign-in Sheet and place in large envelope.

SAY: Be a savvy shopper and get more from your food dollar. Take advantage of sale items, coupons, foods sold in bulk and other cost saving tips.

Being a savvy shopper is not only good for our health as we plan and shop for healthy meals, but also our wallet and the environment, too.

As stated at the start of the class, it is our hope that you are able to:

1. List three shopping tips that can help families buy more nutritious foods for less money.
2. Describe how to use in-store shopping tools like circulars, unit prices, and coupons.
3. Name two ways to reduce food waste.

Please take a moment to reflect on what we discussed today.

ASK: Would someone like to share one thing they learned and/or liked about today's class?

(Allow time for participants to think about and share with the class.)

ASK: Are there any remaining questions before we complete the session evaluation?

DO: Distribute post survey/session evaluation forms or conduct verbally.

13. CLOSING

SAY: Thank you for attending our class today. Remember, healthy eating can be done on a budget!

If part of a series of classes:

At our next class, which will take place [time, location], we will talk about nutritional label reading.

Circle One: **PRE** or **POST**

NAME:

NUTRITION 5 – LESSON 3 EVALUATION FORM

SHOPPING ON YOUR BUDGET

Please respond to the following questions using the scale below.

After attending this session, I feel confident that I can:

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1. I can list three shopping tips that can help families buy more nutritious food for less money.					
2. I can describe how to use in-store shopping tools like circulars, unit prices, and coupons.					
3. I can name two ways to reduce food waste.					

Please return this form to the instructor when you are done.

REFERENCES:

- 1 USDA MyPlate Shop Smart, Understanding the Price Tag
- 2 Maine SNAP-Ed Healthy Eating on a Budget, Save Money at the Supermarket
- 3 USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service, Food Product Dating. <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/food-safety-basics/food-product-dating>
- 4 USDA Food Loss and Waste, Consumers, Videos <https://www.usda.gov/foodlossandwaste/consumers>

SAMPLE WEEKLY MEAL PLAN

	MONDAY* EXAMPLE	TUESDAY TO DO IN CLASS
Breakfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Breakfast Fruit Cup with Greek yogurt</i> • <i>Scrambled eggs with veggies and avocado</i> 	<i>(Include 3 – 5 food groups.)</i>
Lunch	<p>Find a lunch recipe that includes at least one vegetable and a protein food.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Chicken, Veggie & Corn filled Pita bread</i> • <i>Zesty Asian Chicken Salad</i> • <i>Tuna Apple Salad</i> 	<i>(Include 3 – 5 food groups.)</i>
Dinner	<p>Find a recipe for dinner that includes protein, vegetables & a grain.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Chicken & Dumplings</i> • <i>Vegetable & Chicken Enchiladas</i> • <i>Simple Fish Tacos</i> <p>What vegetable side dishes can we include?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Zucchini Sauté</i> • <i>Avocado Tortilla Soup</i> • <i>Herbed Roasted Vegetable Combo</i> 	<i>(Include 3 – 5 food groups.)</i>
Snacks	<p>Find a snack recipe that includes vegetables & a snack recipe that includes grain food.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Chickpea (Hummus) Dip with Vegetables,</i> • <i>Veggie Tortilla Roll- up</i> • <i>Green salad & Fruit bowl</i> 	<i>(Use snacks to fill in any gaps.)</i>

*All of the recipes include at least 3 of the 5 food groups

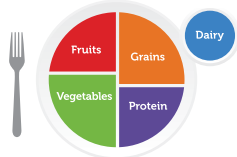
NUTRITION 5 CURRICULUM - HOME ACTIVITIES SHEET

LESSON THREE - Shopping on Your Budget

INSTRUCTIONS: The following are recommended activities to try at home on your own or with your family. We will have some time during the next class to share what you accomplished. Feel free to post on a wall or the refrigerator at home to track your progress!

ACTIVITY	STATUS
Apply for CalFresh benefits, if possible.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply
Make half your plate fruits and vegetables at least 3 times this week.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress
Be physically active for at least 30 minutes 3 times this week.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress
Make a weekly meal plan.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress
Make a shopping list based on your weekly meal plan.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress
Check and use supermarket ads and/or circulars for cost savings.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress

Start simple
with MyPlate



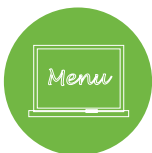
Grocery Shopping

Healthy eating is important at every age. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When grocery shopping, choose options that are full of nutrients and limited in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Start with these tips:



See what you already have

When starting your grocery list, think about the five food groups—fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. Take a look at the foods you already have in your refrigerator, freezer, and pantry and shop for foods you may be missing.



Plan your weekly meals

Write down meals you want to make for the week. Think of creative ways to use some of the items you already have together with some new ones. Strive for a variety of foods in each of the food groups.



Remember the basics

Don't forget to include foods like fruits and vegetables, which may not be a part of a recipe but are great to have as snacks. Fresh, canned, frozen, dried, and dehydrated all count!



Keep organized for a quick exit

Finish your list by organizing needed items into groups, such as grocery sections or food groups. This helps to stay focused, buy only the items you need, and make a quick exit.



Look around for savings

Save more by using coupons, signing up for your store loyalty programs, buying foods on sale and in-season, or comparing brands and prices. Store brands are usually less expensive.



Read labels

Make the best choice for your needs by comparing nutrition and ingredient information by reading the food label or the [Nutrition Facts label](#). Look for those with less added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium.

EAT RIGHT WHEN MONEY'S TIGHT

Food costs are on the rise. Read on for tips on how to stretch your food dollars by planning ahead, budgeting, making smart food choices, and preparing low-cost recipes

Shop SMARTER!

BEFORE Shopping

- ▶ **Plan your weekly meals and snacks.** Preparing in advance will help you know what you need and also help you put leftovers to good use. See below for more on planning ahead.
- ▶ **Use store circulars and go online to look for coupons, sales, and store specials.** Only use coupons on foods you normally eat. Make sure the coupons give you the best value for your money.
- ▶ **For added savings, sign up for the store discount card or bonus card** at your local supermarket.

PLAN AHEAD

- Plan to prepare and eat foods you already have at home first.
- Know how much money you have to spend on food.
- Make a shopping list based on the money you have to spend and what foods you will need.
- Buy only the amount of food you can use before it spoils. Remember, frozen, canned, or shelf-stable foods last longer!

DURING Shopping

- ▶ **Have something to eat before you go shopping.** It's easier to stick to your shopping list when you are not hungry.
- ▶ **Try store brands.** They are the same quality and cost less.
- ▶ **Compare products for the best deal.** Use unit pricing and also the Nutrition Facts labels to get the best product for your money. For more on food labels go to: <http://snap.nal.usda.gov/resource-library/handouts-and-websites/using-nutrition-facts-labels>.
- ▶ **Check "sell by" or "use by" dates.** Buy the freshest food possible. For more on food product dating, go to: <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/food-labeling/food-product-dating/food-product-dating>.



AFTER Shopping

- ▶ **Store food right away** in the refrigerator or freezer to keep it fresh and safe.
- ▶ **If you buy a large amount** of fresh food, like meat, poultry, or fish, divide it into meal-size packages, label the food, and freeze it for later use.
- ▶ **Use foods** with the earliest expiration dates first.



MORE TO EXPLORE...

MyPlate Healthy Eating on a Budget: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/healthy-eating-on-budget.html>
Basic Nutrition for Everyone: <http://snap.nal.usda.gov/basic-nutrition-everyone>
What's Cooking? USDA Mixing Bowl: <http://www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov/>

TIPS

BEST BUYS FOR COST AND NUTRITION

BREADS AND GRAINS

Choose **whole-grain breads**. Look for bargains on day-old varieties.

Buy **regular brown rice and old-fashioned oats and grits** instead of instant varieties to save money and consume less sugar, salt, and calories.

VEGETABLES

Buy **large bags** of frozen vegetables.

When choosing **canned vegetables**, look for “low sodium” or “no added salt” on the label.

FRUITS

Buy **fresh fruit in season** - it generally costs less.

Frozen and canned fruits are available year round, can save you money, and have similar nutrition values to fresh.

LOW-FAT OR FAT-FREE MILK PRODUCTS

Buy **low-fat or fat-free milk, yogurt, and cheese** in the largest size that can be used before spoiling. Larger containers cost less per serving than smaller sizes.

Ultra-pasteurized milk found on store shelves has a longer expiration date and won't spoil as fast.

MEAT AND BEANS

Dried beans and peas are a good source of protein and fiber. They can last a year or more without spoiling.

Canned tuna packed in water is an inexpensive healthy protein choice. Light tuna has less mercury than white (albacore) tuna.



Did You Know?

You may qualify for more than Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. If you get SNAP benefits and have children in school, they qualify for free lunch and breakfast. If you have a low income and are pregnant, breastfeeding, a new mom, or have children under 5 years old, you might qualify for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits. The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is another Federal program that provides food to low-income people.

USDA Nutrition Assistance Programs Can Help Make Ends Meet

For more information on the following programs, contact:

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

For: eligible low-income people and their families

Call: 1-800-221-5689

Visit: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/snap-application-and-local-office-locators>

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

For: eligible, low-income pregnant or breastfeeding women, new moms, and children under age 5

Visit: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/toll-free-numbers-wic-state-agencies>

School Nutrition Programs

For: eligible low-income, school-aged children.

Contact your local school or school district

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

For: eligible low-income people

Visit: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tefap/eligibility-and-how-apply>



RESOURCES FOR SNAP EDUCATORS, PARTNERS, AND THE COMMUNITY

The SNAP-Ed Connection is an online resource center which contains information on healthy eating and using your food dollar wisely. Visit the SNAP-Ed Connection at <http://snap.nal.usda.gov>



CREATE A GROCERY GAME PLAN

GROCERY LIST

FRUITS

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

GRAINS

(BREADS, PASTAS, RICE, CEREALS)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

DAIRY

(MILK, YOGURT, CHEESE)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

VEGETABLES

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

PROTEIN FOODS

(MEAT, SEAFOOD, BEANS & PEAS, NUTS, EGGS)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

OTHER

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

NOTES:

Unit Price Tag Comparison



A.

6 OZ LOWFAT YOGURT	
Unit Price	You Pay
\$0.12	\$0.72
Per oz	



B.

32 OZ LOWFAT YOGURT	
Unit Price	You Pay
\$0.05	\$1.62
Per oz	



This material was funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-- SNAP. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



32 OZ LF YOGURT

UNIT PRICE \$0.05 per oz	RETAIL PRICE \$1.62
--	--------------------------------------


846519725548123



6 OZ LF YOGURT

UNIT PRICE \$0.12 per oz	RETAIL PRICE \$0.72
--	--------------------------------------


84651978466659



This material was funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-- SNAP. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Understanding the Price Tag

1. The price tags on grocery store shelves have a lot of information. They are called **Unit Prices**. The Unit Price can help us choose the best priced item.

2. **Retail Price:** This is the price you pay for one single item.

3. **Unit Price:** This is the cost of an item by its size or unit. This can be by the pound, ounce, quart, or another measurement. It can be very useful when comparing two items.

4. The image on the back of the card shows 2 different price tags on a shelf. Based on the unit price, you can see the larger container is a better buy because you get more for your money.

How is the Unit Price Found?

$$\text{TOTAL PRICE} \div \text{SIZE} = \text{UNIT PRICE}$$

What is the unit price of a 6 oz. yogurt that has a retail price of of \$0.72?

$$\text{\$0.72} \div \text{6 oz.} = \text{\$0.12}$$

The unit price of this yogurt is **\\$0.12 per oz.**



CREATE A GROCERY GAME PLAN

WEEKLY CALENDAR

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
BREAKFAST							
LUNCH							
DINNER							
SNACKS							

NOTES:



Easy Steps to Prevent Food Waste

Everyone is shopping smarter these days. It is important for the environment to keep food waste out of landfills where it produces methane, a powerful greenhouse gas.

Use these tips to save on groceries and help the environment.

1. Plan ahead



Before you go to the grocery store or order online, make a list so you don't buy more than you need.

2. Serve smart



Portion control is good for your waistline, and good for reducing plate waste.

3. Love your leftovers



Pack leftovers in small portions in shallow containers, mark the contents and date, refrigerate and use within 3 to 4 days or freeze immediately.

4. Compost, don't trash



Food scraps can be recycled into compost, an organic material that can be added to soil to help plants grow. Set up a home compost bin or drop your food waste at a local compost center.

Learn more about food loss and waste prevention at www.usda.gov/foodlossandwaste.