



You can eat healthy on any budget

Is eating healthy food going to cost me more money?

Eating healthy meals and snacks does not have to cost you more money. In fact, eating healthy can even save you money. You may be surprised to learn that in general, the cheaper a food is for each serving, the healthier it is! These healthy, cheaper foods are usually items that you will need to prepare at home. Here are some ideas to help you eat healthy and save money.

Planning ahead

- Take the time to plan a menu and make a shopping list. This will save you money and save you the time it takes to make extra trips to the grocery store.
 - Check what food you already have in your kitchen so that you do not buy food that you do not need.
 - Use grocery store flyers to plan your meals.
 - Hungry shoppers tend to buy more than they need, so eat before you go grocery shopping.
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Shopping tips

- 7 out of 10 purchases in a grocery store are unplanned. Foods bought on impulse are often expensive and unhealthy choices. So, follow your shopping list.
- Stock up on items, such as canned goods, when they go on sale. Be careful because “sale items”, such as end-of-isle displays, are not always cheaper.
- Look at food items on the top and bottom shelves. The highest priced items are usually at eye-level. Store brands and generic brands usually cost less than brand name products, and they are the same quality.
- Look at the unit price to find the best buy. The unit price is the price listed for a specific amount such as ounce or gram. Many times the larger size is not a better deal.
- Many convenience foods are costly. For example, you can save 10 cents a glass if you purchase orange juice from concentrate and add your own water instead of buying ready made juice.
- Single portion items are often more expensive than buying in bulk. For example, buying single serving cans of fruit, yogurt or pudding is more expensive than buying in bulk.

Meal suggestions

- Meat is usually expensive so try to eat alternatives such as eggs or beans once or twice a week.
 - Use meat-stretching main dishes like casseroles, soups and stews.
 - Slow cookers are an excellent way to cook less expensive meat cuts so that they will be tender and have lots of flavour. Slow cookers also save you time, enjoy coming home to a hot meal (see the insert for an easy and low cost slow cooker recipe).
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How to get the most for your money when buying fruits and vegetables

- Fruits and vegetables are usually a cheaper choice when compared with prepared foods and convenience snacks.
- To get the best value, buy fruits and vegetables when they are in season. They will taste the best and cost the least.
- Consider shopping at discount grocery stores, such as Food Basics or No Frills, for good produce at better prices. Many produce items are half the price of regular grocery store prices.

Food Item	Sample cost at a regular grocery store	sample cost at a discount grocery store
Red pepper	\$4.99 / pound	\$1.97 / pound
Red delicious apple	\$1.49 / pound	\$0.85 / pound
Romaine lettuce	\$1.49 each	\$0.97 each

*These prices are based on a random visit to the grocery stores. Prices will vary between stores and at different times of the year.

- Join a community garden to get some activity and enjoy the freshest produce. If you live in North Hamilton, you can call 905-523-6611 for more information about adult and children garden programs.

Where to find help with food costs

- Consider asking a friend to join you in forming a “food buying club” so that you can buy more expensive items in bulk and then share them.
- Join a Community Kitchen group. These groups come together to learn how to cook new recipes and then everyone gets to take a meal home. If you live in North Hamilton call 905-523-6611 for more information.
- If you urgently need help to provide food for your family, contact a local food bank. In Hamilton you can call FoodShare at 905-664-9065 and they will tell you where you can go.

See for yourself ...

Here is an example of how to save money and make healthy choices

Meal	Lower Cost Per Serving	\$	Higher Cost Per Serving	\$
Breakfast	½ cup bottled apple juice	0.13	½ cup bottled cranberry juice	0.37
	½ cup cooked oatmeal (bulk)	0.21	½ cup instant oatmeal	0.80
	1 cup 1% milk (4 litre bag)	0.18	1 cup 1% milk (2 litre box)	0.32
	2 slices whole wheat toast	0.05	2 frozen waffles	0.50
	2 teaspoons store brand margarine	0.09	2 teaspoons margarine	0.24
	1 tablespoon jam	0.40	1 tablespoon maple syrup	0.40
Lunch	2 slices whole wheat bread	0.05	1 kaiser bun	0.17
	1 slice low fat cheese	0.16	1 slice roast beef	0.37
	1 carrot	0.07	1 stalk celery	0.18
	1 orange	0.17	1 pear	0.47
	½ cup frozen orange juice	0.29	1 junior juice	0.42
	3 arrowroot cookies	0.08	1 low fat granola bar	0.37
Supper	4 oz hamburger (club pack)	0.42	4 oz hamburger (pack serves 4)	0.79
	1 baked potato (5 pound bag)	0.09	1 baked potato (from bulk)	0.33
	2 teaspoons store brand margarine	0.09	2 teaspoons margarine	0.24
	½ cup frozen green beans-bag	0.27	½ cup frozen green beans-box	0.80
Snack	1 ounce low fat cheese	0.26	Packaged cheese and crackers	0.56
	4 low fat crackers	0.03		
Total		\$ 3.04		\$ 7.33

*Prices are based on a random visit to a grocery store.
Prices may vary between stores and at different times of the year.



Healthy choices from all 4 food groups from Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating

Food Group	Expensive Choices	Less Expensive Choices
Vegetables & Fruit	Out of season produce. Single portion servings. Boxed or canned vegetables (such as instant potatoes).	Fresh fruit and vegetables that are in season. Frozen vegetables.
Milk & Milk Products	Individual portions of yogurt and pudding.	4 litre bags of milk and bulk yogurt. Homemade pudding. Skim milk powder can be used in soups, puddings, baking, sauces and casseroles.
Grain Products	Instant rolled oats and ready to eat cereals. Single portion snacks such as granola bars, and rice krispie squares. Many crackers.	Cooked cereals. Buy any snacks in bulk and portion into single servings at home. Use pasta and noodles in meat casseroles.
Meat & Alternatives	Roasts, steaks, lamb, shrimp, corned beef and canned meats. Skinless, boneless meats.	Use cheaper cuts of meat such as stewing beef, and shoulder cuts. Marinate to add flavour and tenderness. Buy a whole chicken and cut it into pieces. Use beans in casseroles, soups and salads.

The food guide is available on Health Canada's website <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca> or from your dietitian.

please turn over →

Here is an easy and low cost slow cooker recipe

Favourite Chili (Adapted from Rival Crock Pot Owner's Guide)

19 oz can kidney beans	2 cloves garlic, crushed
19 oz can black beans	2 tablespoons chili powder
28 oz can diced tomatoes	1 teaspoon black pepper
1 lb lean ground beef	1 teaspoon cumin (if desired)
1 green bell pepper, chopped	1 teaspoon salt
1 medium onion, chopped	

Brown the ground beef in a frying pan. Drain off fat. Put all the ingredients in a slow cooker in the order they are listed. Stir once. Put the lid on and cook on low for 10 to 12 hours, or on high for 5 to 6 hours.