

Healthy Shopping on a Budget

The Importance of Planning

Healthy shopping on a budget takes planning. Planning helps you save time and money as well as eat healthier. Explore this page for some tips and tricks on how to plan shopping trips so both your health and your wallet can benefit.

Tips and Ideas

Make a list and stick to it

- Lists help you avoid impulse purchases that are usually unhealthy and expensive

Shop mostly the perimeter of the store

- Spend most of your grocery budget on natural foods found around the outside of the store, like fruits, vegetables, dairy, and protein foods that are good for your body
- Limit your shopping in the middle aisles to staple foods like pasta, canned tuna, and nut butter
- Avoid other expensive, processed, and often unhealthy, packaged foods

Shop when you are not hungry or stressed

- People who shop when hungry or stressed tend to not only buy more food, but also healthier food

Compare unit prices. Bigger is not always better

- Use the unit price to compare similar products and make sure you're getting the best deal
- The unit price is the cost per a standard unit, like per ounce or per pound, and it is usually found on a sticker on the shelf beneath the product

Weigh the cost of convenience

- If food tends to rot in your fridge before you prepare it, then you could actually save money by purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables that have been washed and chopped for you

Try frozen and canned fruits and vegetables

- Canned and frozen produce keeps for a long time and may be cheaper per serving than fresh produce

- For frozen, make sure you look for items with no added sauces or sugar
- For canned, choose fruit canned in 100% juice and vegetables that are labeled either “low sodium” or “no added salt”

Use store sales to plan your menu

- Save money by planning your menu around fruits, vegetables, and other healthy items that are on sale each week
- Save time by planning what you are going to make for dinner each night, so you don’t spend time searching through your groceries for ideas

Try store brands

- Store brands, on average, are cheaper by about 26% to 28%, and their quality usually meets, and often surpasses, that of name brand products

Shop produce that is in season

- Buying fruits and vegetables in season generally means your food not only tastes better, but is more nutritious and affordable

Buy in bulk when foods are on sale

- Frozen and canned produce, and some fresh items like apples and carrots, will last a long time
- If you have the storage space, stock up on the foods you eat regularly when they are on sale to save some money

Final Considerations

For more information about healthy eating and active living resources, please email 5210healthywashoe@nnph.org.