

# To Your Health

November 2008

## Small Savings Add Up!

Try some or all of these ideas for food budget savings.

### Costly convenience foods

How much time do you really save when you buy a convenience food? It takes just a few seconds to mix your own sugar and cinnamon to sprinkle on toast rather than buying it pre-mixed, for example. Microwaving a bowl of regular oatmeal rather than pouring hot water over a pre-measured package adds only a few seconds. And, you're likely to save by cutting fruits and vegetables yourself. (The pre-cut ones won't last as long anyway.)

**Savings example:** Buying a carton of old-fashioned or quick oatmeal that provides 30 servings vs. buying 3 boxes of instant oatmeal that contain 10 packets each = a savings of \$5.50.

### Staple food stock up

Invest in staple foods when they're on sale. Buying a boatload of bananas (and other perishable foods) isn't a very good long-term investment. Stocking up on staple items such as tomato sauce, flour, sugar, other canned items can be. Remember to check expiration dates and use products before they expire. Otherwise, it's money in the garbage can.

**Savings example:** Stocking up on 10 cans of food reduced by 20 cents apiece = a savings of \$2.00.

### Bulking up when the price is right and you can use it

First, do the math and check if you actually do save by buying a larger package. The cost of two - of a smaller size may be a better price than the larger one. Plus, will you use the food while the flavor is still tasty and the quality good? Always check it out. If the larger size meets your criteria, go for it!

**Savings example:** Buying a 5-pound bag of rice instead of 1-pound bag = a savings of \$1.50.

### Store brand savings

Store brands are comparable in nutrition to name brands. And, taste-wise, there may be little difference. In some comparisons, they have been preferred over the name brands. Some store brands may vary more in size, color, or texture than the name brands. However, this may not be important, depending on their use. A less than perfect vegetable may be just fine in a casserole or soup.

**Savings example:** Buying two store brand products and saving 50 cents on each = a savings of \$1.00.

Source: University of Nebraska Extension. Prices are rounded to the nearest 50 cents and may vary by store and region. <http://lancaster.unl.edu/Food>

## Sweet on Sweet Potatoes

Sweet potatoes (you may see them listed as "yams" in your market) are most often eaten cooked. You can boil, bake, or fry a sweet potato, and add favorite toppings - such as cinnamon, honey, lime, ginger or coconut. They compliment your favorite meal and are good for you! The starchy tuberous roots we know as sweet potatoes are rich in complex carbohydrates, dietary fiber, beta carotene, vitamin C, and vitamin B6.

**Selection:** Pick sweet potatoes that are firm, without cracks, cuts and bruises.

**Storage:** Keep sweet potatoes in a cool, dark and well-ventilated place. If the temperature is too warm, they may sprout, become woody or spoil.

**Leftovers:** Refrigerate immediately after the meal. Store leftovers for up to one week in the refrigerator, or freeze for a later meal.

## Whipped Cider Sweet Potatoes

*Try something different!*

Serves 4

Need:

2 sweet potatoes (about 1  $\frac{1}{4}$  pounds), peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces

1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups apple cider

1 cinnamon stick

1 tablespoon butter, optional

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Directions:

In a saucepan, combine potatoes, cider, and cinnamon stick. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. The liquid will not cover the potatoes entirely. Reduce the heat, partially cover, and simmer for 20 minutes, or until

tender and a knife can easily pierce potatoes, stirring occasionally. Remove cinnamon stick. Add butter and beat with an electric mixer until smooth. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Approximate nutrition information per serving: 175 calories, 0 grams fat, 2 grams fiber.

Source of recipe: "BecauseWeCare" newsletter, September 2008, American Cancer Society

## Stay Fit; Keep Your Spirits Bright

If you want to do a better job of coping with stress that comes your way, there is one habit that practically guarantees better physical and mental health any time of year. That is **physical activity** - aka exercise. (If the "e" word makes you think of something sweaty and unpleasant, try calling it "moving your body.") In terms of your health, almost any kind of movement has benefits. For optimal results, aim for at least 10 minutes of activity at a time, at least 30 minutes per day, at least 5 days a week.

### ✓Put activity on your schedule.

When something is important to us, we write it on our calendar or type it into our PDA. So, make physical activity just as important as your other business and social obligations. Write it into your schedule. Figure out where you can carve out time to spend in the yard, at the gym, at yoga class, or walking - then put it in writing. Planning ahead to be physically active makes it much more likely that you will get into the habit of moving your body every day.

Source: *Eat Right Montana*, November 2008