

## Money Saving Tips – related to shopping for food

(Denise Wyland, ISU Nutrition and Health Field Specialist)

May 2008

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### ***Shopping for Food***

A trip to the grocery store can be like walking through an advertisement. Displays and packages may tempt you to buy foods you do not need. To avoid overspending the next time you head to the store --

- Shop from a list. Write down the items that you need to purchase and shop from that list.
- Eat before going food shopping. If you are hungry, you will be more tempted to buy foods that are not on your list.
- Shop alone, if possible. You will be less distracted. If you shop with children, help them learn to be good shoppers, too. They could help select an item or two on the list, such as an unsweetened cereal, or a fruit or vegetable for family meals or snacks.
- Learn the layout of the store you usually shop at, so you can find foods quickly.
- Go down only the aisles where you can find foods on your list. “Sight-seeing” in other aisles may tempt you to buy something you don’t need.

### ***Save Money on Breads, Cereals, Rice and Pasta***

- Buy day-old bread or rolls. Use them quickly, freeze them, or use them in recipes.
- Buy unsweetened cereals. Adding a little sugar yourself costs less than buying sweetened cereal.
- Store brands may cost less than national brands.
- Plain pasta shapes like macaroni cost less than fancy shapes.
- Brown rice and regular white rice cost less than instant rice.

### ***Save Money on Fruits and Vegetables***

“Wednesday – Banana Day” The grocery store that I regularly shop at offers bananas at a reduced price on Wednesday. That’s one way that I save money on fresh fruit. Here are some other ways:

- Buy fresh fruits and vegetables in season from grocery stores or farmers’ markets. Avoid buying more than you can use before the fresh produce spoils.
- Reduced-price produce can be a good buy only if you use the items quickly and there is no evidence of spoilage.
- Choose store brands of canned fruits and vegetables to get good quality at a lower price.
- Buy plain frozen vegetables instead of ones with special sauces or seasonings.
- Compare prices of larger bags of frozen vegetables to smaller boxed or bagged or canned vegetables. You can remove small amounts at a time to prepare from the larger bag and save the rest for later.
- Avoid microwaveable vegetables in their own box. You can easily use your own container with less expense.



### ***Save Money on Milk and Dairy Products***

“Look at the price of milk! How can I afford to keep buying it?” As the price of milk and other dairy products has gone up, many consumers wonder the same thing. Milk and dairy products are important components of a healthy diet. So we need to look for ways to include them on fewer dollars.

- “Milk Monday” – The store I shop at regularly offers their store brand gallons of milk at a reduced price on Monday.
- To get the most for your nutrition dollar, choose milk and dairy products with fat content in mind. Buy less whole milk, cream, ice cream and more skim milk and ice milk, reduced fat or low-fat cottage cheese, yogurt and cheeses
- Buy the store brand of milk and other dairy products – such as cottage cheese, yogurt, block cheeses, shredded cheeses.
- Buy the largest container of milk you can use by the date printed on the container.
- Save money by buying a block of cheese and slicing or grating it yourself.
- *Stretch* the amount you use. If a recipe calls for shredded cheese, use less. Or sprinkle a little cheese over the top of a casserole or salad instead of using it as an ingredient.
- Purchase nonfat dry milk and reconstitute for cooking. (Nonfat dry milk will keep for up to six months on the shelf.)

### ***Save Money on Meats, Dry Beans and Peas***

Meat, poultry, fish are probably the most expensive food purchases we can make.

- Buy in bulk, such as ground beef. Repackage in quantities that you will need for a meal. Package in freezer weight paper or plastic; label, date and freeze.
- Cut up your own meat. Buy a boneless chuck roast to cut up for soup, stew and stir-fry. Whole chicken usually costs less than pieces, and you can cut it yourself.
- Watch for special prices on meat, fish and poultry. Plan meals to use the meat you can buy at a good price.
- Cut down on the amount of luncheon meat and sausages you buy. Pick store brands to save money.
- Use cooked dried beans, peas and lentils to make hearty, low-cost soups and casseroles.

### ***Dinner on a Dollar***

You can prepare appealing and nutritious meals and stay within your budget. You can please your family and save money by planning meals, shopping carefully and using your basic food preparation skills.

First, look at your food habits. Do you eat on the run, stopping at fast food restaurants or convenience stores? Do you purchase convenience foods regularly – such as frozen main meal dinners, single-serving products, frozen or prepared cakes or pastries, cooked whole chickens and deli foods? Do you eat out or order in often (pizza for example)? Total your monthly spending on these items and you’ll be surprised how much money you’re spending on food.

Even though convenience foods can make life a little easier by saving time, a dollar here and a dollar there adds up quickly. To truly have dinner on a dollar you will have to prepare most of your meals at home using very few convenience items.