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Save Dollars – Reduce Food Waste

At home, the average American family throws away 14 percent of their food according to a USDA funded study in 2004. “In terms of money, that’s almost \$600 every year in meats, fruits, vegetables, grains and dairy products,” says Denise Wyland, nutrition and health field specialist with Iowa State University Extension. “We lose money whenever we toss food because it spoiled before we got around to eating it.”

Make **planning** to avoid tossing foods a priority. Wyland suggests planning the use of leftovers in casseroles, soups, for snacks and in lunch boxes. “If there is food waste in your household, ask yourself ‘why,’” says Wyland.

- *Are you buying food in the right quantities?
- *Is food refused or left on the plate?
- *Are servings too large?
- *Is the food cooked properly?

Create a “leftover” or “to use up” list and post it on the refrigerator and freezer. Wyland says this tip should significantly reduce the amount of food spoilage.

Here are **additional ways** to reduce food waste:

- *Use see-through storage containers for refrigerated leftovers.
- *Use leftovers in next-day breakfasts, lunches, snacks or dinners.
- *Label, date, and freeze leftover main dishes in meal-size servings.
- *Write the date on packaged foods before storing in freezer or cupboard. Arrange supplies so the oldest items are in front. You’ll see and use them first.
- *Make less – reduce portion sizes.
- *Check supplies and “leftover” or “to use up” list when menu planning before going to the store.

Additional tips and information on buying and eating nutritious food can be found at www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings - the Iowa State University Extension ***Spend Smart Eat Smart*** web site.

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