



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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EAT HEALTHY ON A BUDGET WITH SIMPLE TIPS

March is National Nutrition Month

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – When money is tight and time is short, it may seem impossible to maintain a balanced diet. As families under economic stress work to stretch their food dollars, they may abandon good health. The Department of Health is reminding Tennesseans during National Nutrition Month this March that mealtime can be both healthful and affordable.

“Many people believe that to eat healthy you have to spend a lot of money,” said Health Commissioner Susan R. Cooper, MSN, RN. “With just a bit of planning, you can create meals that are tasty, convenient, nutritious and inexpensive.”

Here are some simple tips to help you save money while shopping for food and still maintain a healthful diet:

- Plan your meals before shopping for groceries. Even a small amount of advance planning can help you save money by avoiding impulse purchases.
- Use coupons. Clipping coupons from the newspaper or printing them from Web sites can save big dollars on your weekly food bill. Look for stores that double coupons, and consider joining supermarket shopper’s clubs for special prices.
- Shop “high and low” on grocery store shelves. Manufacturers pay to place their products at eye level, and less expensive versions of the same items can often be found on upper or lower shelves.
- Serve healthful, not oversized, portions of meat. Remember that a portion of meat is about the size of a deck of cards. This will help you save money in the meat department.
- Serve meatless meals. Beans and other legumes are an excellent source of protein and are an inexpensive way to create a healthful meal.
- Think “outside the crisper.” Frozen, canned and dried fruits and vegetables tend to be less expensive and will last longer than fresh versions, and they’re just as nutritious. Include a variety of produce in your diet.

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- Consider growing some of your own produce. Many items, such as tomatoes, strawberries and peppers, can be grown in containers on your patio or porch. Young plants are inexpensive, and packets of seeds cost just pennies.
- Don't throw away money. Keep your leftovers safe by refrigerating or freezing them quickly, and use them before they go bad to stretch one meal into a few.

The Department of Health has other resources to help you eat healthy on a budget. Check out our online cookbook full of simple recipes that can be prepared with common, inexpensive ingredients. Find the cookbook at <http://health.state.tn.us/nutrition/recipes.html>.

TDOH also employs registered dietitians at health departments across the state. These health professionals provide counseling on issues from infant nutrition to diabetes and obesity for adults. You can also submit a question online through the "Ask a Dietitian" service. Submit your question with the form at http://health.state.tn.us/nutrition/ask_diet_form.html.

Get Fit Tennessee also offers free and simple tips for improving nutrition every day. You'll find examples of proper portion sizes, and you can sign up to receive a daily e-mail tip to help you lead a more healthful life. Learn more by visiting the Get Fit Web site at www.getfittn.com and clicking "Nutrition."

To get more information about the availability of nutrition counseling in your area, contact your local health department or visit the American Dietetic Association at www.eatright.org. Additional information about how to improve your nutritional health can be found at www.mypyramid.gov and www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org.

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