

Healthy Eating on a Budget

Eating a healthy diet is an important part of aging and living well, but sometimes limited budgets and high prices make affording healthy foods difficult. Still, there are creative ways to eat well and stay within your budget.

Plan

Planning your meals for the week and creating a grocery list helps you stay focused while shopping.

- **Set a budget.** Review your monthly budget and decide on the amount you can spend on food. Be sure to divide your monthly food budget equally between the number of weeks in the month.
- **See what you already have.** Check your pantry, refrigerator and freezer to see what staples you have. Begin your planning using these ingredients.
- **Try new recipes.** Search for low-cost, healthy recipes to try. This provides an opportunity to try something new while still staying in your budget.
- **Make a grocery list.** Use a list when shopping to help you stay focused on the items you need and prevent overspending.
- **Look for sales and coupons.** Search the weekly ads for sale items and coupons. This allows you to save more money on the items you need.

Purchase

Shopping for groceries can be daunting, but there are techniques to use at the store so you can eat healthy — no matter your budget.

- **Sign up for store loyalty cards.** Many grocery stores have free loyalty cards that provide milestone rewards or reduced prices on certain items.
- **Buy “in-season” produce.** Produce is cheaper during its peak season and it is also fresher.
- **Look for frozen and canned options.** For fruits and vegetables that are not in season, try a frozen or canned option but remember to pick low-sodium options or rinse before eating.
- **Try the store brand.** Most stores offer their own brand of products that often costs less than name brands.
- **Compare prices.** Sale items, store brands or coupons don’t always mean it’s cheaper. Be sure to compare the price per unit so you can determine the lowest cost.
- **Ask for a rain check.** If a sale item has sold out, ask the store for a rain check, which would let you pay the sale price once the item is restocked.

Table 1: Resources

Seasonal Produce

- **Texas Farmers Market – What’s In Season webpage**
texasfarmersmarket.org/in-season
- **Go Texan – Texas Produce Availability Chart**
gotexan.org (search for Produce Availability Chart)
- **Seasonal Food Guide** seasonalfoodguide.org/texas

Healthy Recipes

- **Dinner Tonight** dinnertonight.tamu.edu
- **MyPlate Kitchen** myplate.gov/myplate-kitchen

Food Pantries and Banks

- **Feeding America** feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank
- **Food Pantries Database** foodpantries.org/st/texas

Nutrition Support Programs

- **Area Agencies on Aging** 800-252-9240
- **Aging and Disability Resource Centers** 855-937-2372
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** hhs.texas.gov/services/food/snap-food-benefits
- **Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program**
squaremeals.org/Programs/SeniorFarmersMarketNutritionProgram.aspx
- **Commodity Supplemental Food Program**
squaremeals.org/Programs/CommoditySupplementalFoodProgram.aspx