

## **News Column 5/15/19**

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### **Eat Well on a Budget**

If you are the type of person who budgets every month, you probably have a good grasp on what your food budget for the next four weeks looks like. If you are not the type to regularly budget, take a few moments to figure out a rough estimate for what you are spending each month and what you would like to be spending, and see how those numbers compare. After you've figured out your base budget, you can begin planning how to eat well with the amount of money you are comfortable with and able to spend.

#### **How Do I Stick to My Food Budget?**

So, if you're the kind of person who wanders around the grocery store aimlessly and puts anything tasty you can find right in your basket. These tips will help you shop for good food without wrecking your budget.

1. Make a menu and shopping list. If you have a menu and shopping list, you are keeping your eye on the prize! The prize in this scenario being a finished menu and shopping list and a cart full of pre-selected foods. Sticking to a menu planning and shopping list is hard. Start by coming to the USU Extension office to get a starter packet for menu planning and shopping list for free.
2. Put your spending money in an envelope and bring only that amount with you.
3. Allot yourself a set amount of time to get in and get out of a grocery store. If you have a budget and a time constraint, you are way more likely to go and purchase only those items on your list.
4. Eat before you go shopping. It really does make a difference. If you aren't distracted by being hungry at the store, you will be able to shop with a clear head and you will be much less tempted to purchase tasty looking, bad for you goodies like that donut that keeps staring at you from the bakery department.
5. Round up. Bring a calculator with you and round up on each purchase, adding as you go along to make sure you stay within your budget. General rule of thumb is to round up to the nearest dollar, so if you purchase something that costs \$2.30 with tax included, round up to \$3.
6. Shop for the fruit and vegetables that are in season, and when possible, grown locally.
7. Try the store brand product. Usually these generic products are the same quality, or sometimes even better than the name brand.
8. Cook large meals and freeze excess for later. This will help you during times of financial distress, or it will just help you stretch your food out for longer.
9. Avoid unhealthy foods as much as possible. If you are just getting by, eating the best you can is good enough until you have the resources to eat even better.
10. The benefits of eating together as a family at least 4-5 times a week for a nice family meal. If eating meals together is a new endeavor, it is important to be realistic and set a goal all family members agree on. Perhaps having family breakfast might work better. Be sure to schedule a regular time for whichever meal you choose, so family members know what to plan on, and include everyone in the meal

preparation and clean up. Have family members check electronic devices at the door so there are no distractions.