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How to shop on a low budget

You can save money and eat healthier too by changing how you shop and prepare for meals. Taking 30 minutes once a week to plan your menus will help you budget your groceries and ensure that you eat meals that are good and healthy for you.

Getting Started

1. Take a few minutes to make a weekly menu.
2. Make a list what you need to make the each meal.
3. Look through your pantry and frig to see what stuff you already have and cross them off your list.
4. Look at sales flyers from your grocery store. Save money by planning meals based on what's on sale and what you already have in your kitchen.

While Shopping

1. Bring your list and coupons!
2. Buy food in quantities you will use before it goes bad.
3. Buy in bulk sale items that can be stored for a long time (and that you are sure to use!). If bulk items can be refrigerated or frozen, divide them into smaller portions and store them in freezer zip-lock bags.
4. Buy fruits and vegetables (produce) in season.
5. Take time to compare ingredients not just labels. Generic brand products usually have the same ingredients as brand name products and cost less.
6. Do not shop on an empty stomach. Shopping when you are hungry may cause you to buy things you don't need on impulse.

Where to Shop

Farmer's Markets: There's a lots of Farmers' Markets around Baltimore! Many of the vendors take Food Stamps AND may double the value of your food stamps for shopping at the market. Here's a link to Farmers' Market locations in Baltimore:

<http://getfreshbaltimore.com/>

Trader Joes: A whole sale grocery store that carries a good selection of organic foods at affordable prices. One location in Baltimore: Towson Town Center.

<http://www.traderjoes.com/>

Grocery Stores: Many grocery stores like Shoppers, Giant and Safeway carry organic foods. In fact both Giant and Safeway have their own organic food label. Giant (*Nature's Promise*) and Safeway (*Open Nature*) offers better quality foods for a few cents more than the usual brands. Look for these organic foods to go on sale and then stock up! Buy more and freeze them for later on in the month.

For weekly menu ideas, visit the nutrition page at www.plannedparenthood.org/maryland

