

Weight Management



Losing or maintaining weight may seem like a challenge in itself. Doing so on a budget may seem impossible. Luckily, a healthy eating plan **can** be affordable! Here are some tips to get you started.

At Home

- **Plan ahead.** Set aside time to find healthy recipes, plan menus, schedule meals, and write out a shopping list before you shop. When you have a plan, you may be less likely to seek out fast food.
- **Watch portion sizes.** Fill half your plate with vegetables and fruits. Split the other half equally between lean protein foods and grains. (Choose whole grains most of the time.)
- **Avoid fad diets.** The latest diets and pills will not help you lose weight any faster. Many are very costly, and some are even dangerous! Your best (and cheapest) bet is to stick to a healthy meal plan.
- **Join a weekly support group.** Instead of signing up for a costly weight-loss program, create your own support group with friends. Exchange tips, recipes, and success stories to stay motivated.
- **Grow your own.** Save cash by growing your own herbs and vegetables, like beets, carrots, radishes, lettuce, and tomatoes.
- **Go meatless once or twice a week.** Choose meat-free meals that contain little or no saturated fat and cholesterol, such as dishes based on beans, eggs, whole grains, vegetables, or tofu. Be aware that meatless dishes that are fried or use lots of cheese, cream, butter, or oil will be high in calories.
- **Pack a lunch.** Instead of going out for lunch, pack your own using leftovers or cheaper ingredients from home. Making your own lunch helps to control fat and calories. And you can save about \$50 a week!
- **See a registered dietitian (RD).** An RD can give you advice and support as you manage your weight, as well as tips about your food budget. Go to www.eatright.org to find an RD in your area or check with your insurance provider to find one on your plan.



At The Market

- **Skip prepackaged meals.** Instead, stick to your shopping list of ingredients to make your own meals.
- **Buy fresh, seasonal produce.** Fresh, in-season fruits and vegetables tend to be cheapest and are an essential part of any healthy meal plan. Look for produce on sale at the market each week, or shop at your local farmers' market.
- **Save on protein foods:**
 - Meats, poultry, and fresh fish tend to be costly. Save money and control calories by sticking to smaller portions (2 to 4 ounces per serving). Also, buy less-expensive protein foods like eggs, tuna canned in water, or beans and lentils. Dried beans, peas, and lentils cost even less than the canned varieties.
 - Whole chickens are cheaper than chicken breasts. You can cut the chicken up and divide it into meal-size portions at home. Remove chicken skin before eating—that is where most of the saturated fat is found.
 - If you buy large packages of meat or chicken to save money, freeze extra portions in sealed freezer-safe bags for future use.
- **Buy in bulk.** Larger packages of food tend to cost less per unit than smaller ones. Pantry staples like olive oil, brown rice, whole wheat pasta, and spices are some good choices to buy in bulk. If a large package is too much food for you, split it with another family.

