

News Column for Use Week of 6/1/2020
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Stretch your Food Dollars

Money is tight, but you can still eat right. Food costs are on the rise. Here are a few tips on how to stretch our food dollars by planning, budgeting, making smart food choices, and preparing low-cost recipes. Know how much money you can spend on food. Before grocery shopping, plan weekly meals and snacks. Preparing in advance will help you know what items you need to complete a meal and help you put leftovers to good use. Make the grocery shopping list based on the money you have to spend and what foods you need to complete the meals you have planned. You may already have some food items in the cupboard and can plan meals around the food items you have. Go online to look for coupons, sales, and store specials. You may even have a store app on your phone that will show you specials for the week that may help you plan meals around the store specials.

Have something to eat before you go grocery shopping. It is easier to stick to your list when you are not grocery shopping hungry. While grocery shopping, compare products for the best deal. Use unit pricing and read Nutrition Facts Labels to get the best product for the money you have. Do not be afraid to try store brands. Store brands are the same quality and cost less. Buy only the amount of food you can use before it spoils. This will prevent food waste.

Remember, frozen, canned, or shelf-stable foods last longer. Look for canned vegetables that are “low sodium” or “no salt added” on the label. Look for fruits canned in 100% juice. After grocery shopping, store food right away in the refrigerator or freezer to keep it fresh and safe. If your food dollars allow and you buy a large amount of fresh food, like meat, poultry, or fish, divide it into meal-size packages, label the food, and freeze it for later use. Use foods with the earliest expiration dates first.

Nutrition: Choose Whole Grains, look for bargains on day-old varieties. Eat a variety of colors of fruits and vegetables, choose low-fat dairy items, vary your protein routine. Try foods that are new to you. Stretch the food dollar by adding beans to the meat in a casserole you make or put refried beans in a taco meat recipe to stretch the servings.

If you have questions about unit pricing, Nutrition Fact Label reading, or product dating, contact Sonia Cooper, River Valley Extension, Nutrition, Food Safety, and Health Agent, srcooper@ksu.edu or 785-632-5335.