The 3 Ps: Plan, Purchase, Prepare!

**Plan**
- Check your pantry and fridge for ingredients you already have.
- Check for sales and coupons in the local paper or online.
- Plan meals and snacks for the week according to an established budget.
- Make a grocery list.

**Purchase**
- Buy groceries when you are not hungry and when you are not too rushed.
- Stick to the grocery list and stay out of the aisles that don’t contain items on your list.
- Buy store brands if cheaper.
- Find and compare unit prices listed on shelves to get the best price.
- Purchase some items in bulk or as family packs which may cost less.

**Prepare**
- Some meal items can be prepared in advance; pre-cook on days when you have time.
- Double or triple up on recipes and freeze meal-sized container of soups and casseroles or divide into individual portions.
- Try a few meatless meals by substituting with beans and peas.
- Incorporate leftovers into a subsequent meal.

Taken from U.S. Department of Agriculture, Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, September 2011
Grocery Shopping Using the Food Groups

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

MyPlate says:
Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.

The Budget Shopper says:
Buy fruits and vegetables in all their forms — fresh, frozen, and canned.

Fresh, frozen, and canned are all nutritious forms of fruits and vegetables. In fact, canned and frozen produce is typically picked and packed at its peak, when it’s chock-full of nutrients. It also lasts longer than fresh, which can cut down on the amount you waste. Try these tips for choosing wisely with fresh, frozen, and canned:

• Buy fresh produce when it’s in season. It will cost less and taste better than out-of-season produce.

• Buy canned or frozen produce year-round. Look for veggies that have not been pre-sauced and say “no salt added,” “low sodium,” or “reduced sodium.” Look for fruits canned in 100% fruit juice, light syrup, or water.

Drain and rinse canned vegetables and beans
Draining and rinsing canned foods reduces the sodium content. A recent study shows draining and rinsing canned beans results in a 41% reduction in sodium; draining alone results in a 36% reduction in sodium.¹

Open can, pour contents into a colander and drain
Rinse under the faucet and drain
**True or False**

Buying fruits and vegetables is too expensive. I will not meet my 2 servings of fruit and 2.5 servings of vegetables.

*FALSE!*

By purchasing from fresh, canned and frozen fruits and vegetables, you can get 18 total portion sizes for just $10 per person a week!

**Remember**

Some fruits and vegetables can be cut and stored in advance for planned meals and snacks.

**Examples**

⇒ Sliced carrot sticks for snacking
⇒ Chopped onions for stews, omelets, salads

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Taken from 2013 Share Our Strength; 2015 USDA MyPlate
GRAINS

MyPlate says:
Make at least half your grains whole.

The Budget Shopper says:
Store brands can save you money on your favorite whole grain foods.

Whole grains don’t have to cost more. In fact, many of your favorite grains are available as whole grains for the same price. You can also look for store brands, like store brand cereal. Try a few and see which ones compare well on taste. Another money-saving bonus? Whole grains that contain fiber can keep you full for longer — so you may not need to cook or serve as much to begin with!

New to whole grains? Here’s a tip: buy the whole-grain version of the grains you already love. You can find whole grain cereal, rice, pasta, bread, crackers, tortillas, and more. To get your family used to the more wholesome taste, start by mixing them together — like half brown rice and half white rice. Slowly increase the amount of whole grains you use. How do you know a food is whole grain? Look for a whole grain word (like whole wheat flour, whole oats, or brown rice) as the first ingredient in the ingredients list.

Time-saving tip: Cook once and eat all week. Cooked whole grains like brown rice can be stored in the fridge for 3-5 days or frozen for up to 6 months. Make a big batch over the weekend or whenever you have the most time. Then use with your meals all week long. Just add a small amount of water to add moisture when reheating.

Taken from 2013 Share Our Strength; 2015 USDA MyPlate
PROTEIN

**MyPlate says:**
Choose lean proteins and vary your protein food choices.

**The Budget Shopper says:**
Use healthy, affordable proteins like beans, eggs, and canned fish several times per week.

Check your receipts next time you go to the store. Protein foods are likely one of the biggest strains on your wallet when it comes to food shopping. Save big by using budget-friendly proteins more often. Replace half the ground meat in tacos with your favorite beans. Use canned tuna or salmon in your next casserole. Or top a salad with hardboiled eggs for protein power. If you’re buying meat or poultry, check your store flyers before you shop. If you have enough space in your freezer, buy in bulk whatever is on deep discount and freeze what you won’t use right away.

**Time-saving tip:** Dried beans are great when you have the time to soak them, but canned beans are a great time-saver for weeknight meals. Rinse and drain before using to cut the sodium by almost half, or look for low-sodium or no-salt-added versions.

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**Other Egg-cellent Benefits**

- 1 day = 1 egg
- Studies suggest that healthy individuals can enjoy an egg a day without increasing blood cholesterol levels.
- 15 cents = 1 egg
- Eggs are one of the most affordable sources of high-quality protein.
Lactose Intolerant

People with lactose intolerance are unable to fully digest the sugar (lactose) in milk. As a result, they have diarrhea, gas and bloating after eating or drinking dairy products. Good news, there are alternative milks to provide you the calcium needed for our body. Try these below:

- Unsweetened Almond Milk
- Unsweetened Soy Milk
- Lactose Free Cow Milk

*Shake well before serving to keep calcium in suspension.

Taken from 2013 Share Our Strength; 2015 USDA MyPlate
Compare unit prices to find the best deal.

Not sure where to find unit price? You can usually find it on the shelf tag just under the food. It will often be listed as “price per ounce” or “price per gallon” — think of gas prices, which are listed as “price per gallon.” The unit price tells you how much it costs for a set amount of food, so you can compare “apples to apples” (or “yogurt to yogurt”!).

**Time-saving tip:** Compare unit prices for block and pre-shredded cheese. Sometimes pre-shredded cheese can have a lower unit price, particularly if it’s on sale. You won’t know until you check.

### 1 Gallon Store Brand Milk

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