



American Heart Association.  
Healthy for Good™



# GROCERY GUIDE

EAT SMART — MOVE MORE — BE WELL



Learn more at [heart.org/HealthyForGood](https://heart.org/HealthyForGood).





## SHOP SMART ON A BUDGET

### Inside this Guide:

Bank on the Basics .....	1
Create Your Food Budget .....	1
About SNAP .....	2
Healthy Eating Recommendations.....	2
Planning Your Meals .....	3
Keep a Well-Stocked Pantry .....	5
When You Shop .....	6
Know Your Labels and Dates .....	6
Grocery List Template .....	8

### Bank on the Basics

The average American family spends about \$182 averaged low-cost plan for family of 4 (2-5 year old and 6-11 year old) a week on groceries. As food prices keep rising, smart shopping (for good nutrition on a budget) becomes more challenging.

Smart shopping means knowing what to buy and when. The good news is that healthy eating can actually cost less. The key is knowing the basics before you go grocery shopping.

Your goal is to choose affordable, nutritious foods that will help keep your family healthy. By creating a food budget, planning menus and shopping wisely, you can save money and enjoy delicious, nutritious meals!

By following the tips in this booklet, you will be able to enjoy healthier food at more affordable prices. Happy shopping!

### Create Your Food Budget

To shop smarter, start with your family's food basics and build a budget. Assess your current spending. How much do you spend on food each week? Make sure to include nonperishable foods and other items you need when cooking, like paper and cleaning products. If you eat meals out, include that cost to calculate your total spending on food. Subtract any food assistance you get. Multiply by 4 to find your monthly food budget. Your family size and the age of family members will affect your budget.

- If you're not sure what your household food budget is, estimate it using this: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cnpp/usda-food-plans-cost-food-reports-monthly-reports>.
- Consider how much you spend on food and compare this to your other expenses. Set spending priorities to keep your food costs in balance with other expenses. Try to stick to your food budget when you shop.

Track your spending each week. Write down everything to help you budget more accurately.



## About SNAP

SNAP stands for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. If you're eligible for these benefits, you can get a variety of healthy foods.

- Learn more about SNAP: [www.fns.usda.gov/snap](http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap)

If you're eligible for SNAP, these are foods you can get for your family: breads and cereals; fruits and vegetables; meats, fish and poultry; dairy products; and edible seeds and plants. Your youngest family members may receive baby food, including infant formula, cereals, 100% juices and baby food in boxes and jars.

## Healthy Eating Recommendations

Think about your family. How you eat at home can have a big impact on the health of your loved ones. The American Heart Association's Healthy Eating Recommendations are based on a 2,000-calorie diet. They're a good guide for healthy eating providing these tips:



### VEGETABLES

CANNED, DRIED, FRESH & FROZEN

5 SERVINGS OR 2.5 CUPS



### FRUITS

CANNED, DRIED, FRESH & FROZEN

4 SERVINGS OR 2 CUPS



### WHOLE GRAINS

BARLEY, BROWN RICE, MILLET, OATMEAL, POPCORN AND WHOLE WHEAT BREAD, CRACKERS & PASTA

3-6 SERVINGS OR 3-6 OUNCES



### DAIRY

LOW FAT (1%) AND FAT FREE

3 SERVINGS OR 3 CUPS



### PROTEINS

EGGS, NON-FRIED FISH, LEAN MEAT, LEGUMES, NUTS SKINLESS POULTRY & SEEDS

1-2 SERVINGS OR 5.5 OUNCES



### OILS

POLYUNSATURATED AND MONOUNSATURATED CANOLA, OLIVE, PEANUT, SAFFLOWER & SESAME OIL

3 TBSP

*Foods should give you energy — not weigh you down:  
With a few simple changes, you can make eating healthy your easiest habit.*

### LIMIT

SUGARY DRINKS, SWEETS, FATTY MEATS, AND SALTY OR HIGHLY PROCESSED FOODS

### AVOID

PARTIALLY HYDROGENATED OILS, TROPICAL OILS, AND EXCESSIVE CALORIES

### REPLACE

HIGHLY PROCESSED FOODS WITH HOMEMADE OR LESS-PROCESSED OPTIONS

### ENJOY

A VARIETY OF NUTRITIOUS FOOD FROM ALL OF THE FOOD GROUPS, ESPECIALLY FRUITS & VEGGIES

### KEEP

HEALTHY HABITS EVEN WHEN YOU EAT AWAY FROM HOME

\* Servings are based on AHA's Healthy US-Style Eating Pattern for 2,000 calories/day. Your calorie needs may be different. servings equivalent may depend on form of food. More info on serving sizes is a [heart.org/servings](http://heart.org/servings).

## Planning Your Meals

Cooking at home may seem time-consuming. However, you can save time by being organized and prepared. You can save money, too!

Use a calendar. Write in the meals for the week. If you know you'll eat out during the week, note that on the calendar and estimate the cost in your budget.

The Healthy for Good™ website has hundreds of healthy options that are simple, quick and budget-friendly. It also has many videos that demonstrate recipes and cooking skills. ([heart.org/recipes](http://heart.org/recipes))

Keep track of recipes your family likes. Note on the recipes if you had leftovers, and keep those meals in mind for your busiest weeks.

Here are some guidelines to use in selecting recipes and making purchases. They'll help you make healthier choices while staying on budget.

- **Check the serving sizes on recipes and the Nutrition Facts labels on boxed or canned foods.** Use the suggested serving size when portioning meals. This will help family members get the right amount of calories. It will also make meals go further. Some recipes may make enough servings for leftovers!
- **Using frozen fish and meats can make meal planning quick and easy.** Canned tuna is a great source of protein; often you can save money by buying several cans. Be sure to trim all visible fat from meat and remove skin from chicken before cooking.
- **Try a meatless meal each week.** Whole grains and beans are great sources of protein. They're often more affordable and may require less work to prepare than meats or seafood. Or feature lentils, tofu or chickpeas as the main ingredient in your next meal.





• **To make meals more fun, create theme nights.**

- o **Salad Night:** Make your entrée a healthy bowl of greens. Toss in pieces of cooked skinless chicken breast and nuts or seeds (with little or no salt) for protein. Use a wide variety of fresh veggies and dark green lettuce. Skip iceberg lettuce; it's lower in nutrients.
- o **Soup's On:** Prepare your favorite vegetable soup recipe. Or, you can sauté a wide range of veggies and greens (like kale and spinach), pour in low-sodium broth and add fresh herbs and some spice for seasoning. For a family, play the "alphabet soup" game and try to use a veggie for as many different letters as possible.
- o **Taco Night:** Pile on the veggies and use whole-wheat or corn tortillas. Mix a little fat-free or low-fat plain Greek yogurt and lemon juice to make a healthier version of sour cream.
- o **Homemade Pizza:** Make a grilled pizza by loading veggies onto a thin, whole-wheat crust. Or make or buy a cauliflower crust! <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/cooking-skills/cooking/vegetables/cauliflower-pizza-crust>
- o **Super Spuds:** Pour vegetarian chili over baked potatoes for an easy meal.

• **Plan to cook once and eat twice.** Save yourself money and time and use all the food you buy. You can make a variety of meals by using the same ingredients in different ways.

- **Add canned, dried, fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables to your cart.** All produce counts! When buying canned, dried or frozen vegetables and fruit, be sure to compare food labels and choose the products with the lowest amount of sodium and added sugars when possible. If you buy fresh produce, seasonality is key. Seasonal produce is usually more affordable. However, carrots, potatoes and greens are versatile, readily available vegetables. Bananas, grapes and oranges are generally affordable fruits that are available all year.
  - o Shop your local farmers' market for fresh, seasonal foods and good prices. Looking at the produce will often give you ideas about what to cook.
  - o Make casseroles, soups and other seasonal produce recipes when the ingredients are at their best, then freeze them. You'll preserve those fresh flavors and be able to get dinner on the table quickly on a busy night!

• **Package your own healthy snacks.** Put cut-up veggies and fruits in portion-sized bags for easy, healthy snacking on the go.

• **Make meals a family affair!** Your kids will be more excited about eating healthy when they've been involved. Teach kitchen basics by giving family members age-appropriate tasks like helping to make lists, cutting coupons, reading labels or unloading groceries. If you're a parent who works late, older children and teens can also help get meals started if you leave basic instructions for them.

• **Clip coupons.** Keep circulars and check the front of your local grocery store for coupon displays. Cut out the coupons, and put them in an envelope to keep with you. Keep in mind many grocery stores also have online coupons available on their website or their apps.

## Make a List

Based on your recipes for the week, write down or type in your phone the ingredients you need to buy. Going to the grocery store without a list isn't smart. You're likely to spend more money on impulse buys and waste time wandering around the store. It's easier to forget key items, too.

*These tips will help with your list-making:*

- **Use the Shopping List Template** included in the back of this guide.
- **Each weekend schedule quiet time to plan meals.** Keep your recipes, grocery lists and coupons in the same place to make planning easier.
- **Be specific.** Note quantity: 4 tomatoes, 2 onions, 1 lb. of lean ground beef. Also note on your grocery list which coupons you have.
- **Add healthy snacks to your list.** Your family will grab fruits and veggies over other items if they're readily available.
- **Inventory your pantry and fridge each week.** Before you head to the store, make sure your list has everything you need.



## Cabinets & Pantry

- ✓ **"Dinner builder" items:** canned or dried beans, such as kidney, pinto, black, butter and navy; canned or pouched tuna, salmon and chicken; spaghetti sauce
- ✓ **Canned vegetables:** for easy side dishes and adding to soups and sauces
- ✓ **Whole grains:** brown rice, oats, couscous, bulgur and quinoa; whole-grain pastas, breads and tortillas (store extra bread and tortillas in the freezer); whole-grain flour or cornmeal for baking
- ✓ **Cooking oils:** nontropical vegetable oils, such as olive, canola and corn
- ✓ **Nuts, seeds and nut butters:** for stir-fries and garnishes (and satisfying snacks)
- ✓ **Broths:** fat-free, low-sodium chicken, vegetable and beef — for making soups
- ✓ **Dried herbs and spices:** keep a variety on hand and buy or create salt-free seasoning blends



## Refrigerator & Freezer

- ✓ **Proteins:** Unbreaded fish fillets, skinless chicken breasts, extra-lean or lean meats; tofu
- ✓ **Dairy products:** low-fat and fat-free milk, yogurt and cheese
- ✓ **Soft margarine:** made with nonhydrogenated vegetable oil and containing no trans fat
- ✓ **Frozen vegetables and fruits:** choose a wide variety (lots of colors) without salty sauces and sugary syrups



## Compare Nutrition Labels

- ✓ **Choose products with the lowest amounts** of sodium, added sugars and saturated fat, and no trans fat
- ✓ **Look for the Heart-Check mark** to easily identify foods that can be part of your heart-healthy eating plan





## When You Shop

When you're shopping, stay focused. You've worked hard to stay on budget and choose healthy foods — don't let your work go to waste!

Here are some things to keep in mind:

- **Know the different types of grocery stores, and the prices they charge.** A basic grocery store sells a wide selection of foods and basic household items. A supermarket is larger and stocks food along with clothing, electronics and other household accessories. Many convenience stores are smaller stores (often connected to gas stations) that primarily offer pre-packaged snacks. Specialty grocery stores and delis sell unique types of food but usually have less variety. Grocery stores and supermarkets tend to have the most affordable food prices. Visit a grocery store close to your home to make shopping as easy as possible.
- **Here's some guidance for shopping at convenience stores.** First, walk around the store to check out all your options. Don't allow yourself to make impulse buys. Be sure to read Nutrition Facts labels. Even though yogurt might seem healthy, it might also be packed with sugar. If you're thirsty, choose water. Avoid the sugary drinks and soda dispensers.
- **Get to know your grocery store aisles and shelves.** Look for aisle markers to help you locate an item. Ask the staff to direct you to save time.
- **Compare prices as you shop.** Store-brand products may be more affordable.
- **Sign up for reward cards and online coupons when stores have them.** You may get special savings alerts and discounts.
- **Download coupon apps.** Information on how you can save will be sent directly to your mobile phone.
- **Use coupons for food items you plan to buy.** And compare prices! Having a coupon for an item doesn't always mean that it's the best deal.
- **Look for whole-grain breads and cereals with less sodium and added sugars.** Store-brand cereals are generally much more affordable.
- **Choose low-fat or fat-free dairy products.** Buy the largest container that your family can finish before the expiration date.
- **Buy in bulk when you can.** It almost always saves money. Buy frozen or shelf stable products to get the most "bang for your buck." (Make sure you have enough room for bulk buys in your pantry or freezer before buying!) You can freeze individual portions for future recipe use.
- **Buy only a week's worth of fresh produce.** And remember, canned, dried, or frozen can be cheaper and just as healthy. (Look for products with less sodium and added sugars.)
- **Save your receipts.** When you get home, compare what you spent to what you budgeted. Adjust your meal planning and budgeting, if needed.

## Know Your Labels and Dates

Learning how to read and understand food packaging is key to knowing what's in your food and how to best store and prepare it. The tips below tell how to quickly get the information you need when buying and cooking healthy meals for your family!

The Nutrition Facts label contains useful information. Use it at the store when comparing products and at home when portioning meals. Here's what you need to know.

- 1 Start here.** Note the size of a single serving and how many servings are in the package.
- 2 Check total calories.** Do the math to know how many calories you're really getting if you eat the whole package.
- 3 Limit certain nutrients.** Compare labels when possible and choose options with lower amounts of added sugars, sodium and saturated fat and no trans fat.
- 4 Get enough of beneficial nutrients.** Eat foods with nutrients your body needs, like calcium, dietary fiber, iron, potassium and Vitamin D.
- 5 Quick guide to % DV.** The % DV section tells you the percent of each nutrient in a single serving, in terms of the daily recommended amount. As a guide, if you want to consume less of a nutrient (such as saturated fat or sodium), choose foods with a lower % DV — 5 percent or less is low. If you want to consume more of a nutrient (such as fiber), seek foods with a higher % DV — 20 percent or more is high.

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size 2/3 cup (55g)	
Amount per serving	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>230</b>
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 4g	10%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	0%
<b>Sodium</b> 100mg	7%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 37g	13%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
<b>Protein</b> 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	50%
Calcium 200mg	20%
Iron 5mg	10%
Potassium 200mg	8%

It's also smart to look at dates on packages. Depending on which food you're buying, the package date could be a recommendation on when it should be sold or when it should be eaten.

- **"Sell by"** dates tell the store how long to keep the items on the shelves. Buy foods before the "sell by" dates.
- A **"Best if Used By (or Before)"** date is recommended by the manufacturer for best flavor or quality. It's not a purchase or safety date. It just tells when the product should be at peak quality.

If food is handled and stored properly, it will last longer. Don't eat spoiled food. Remember: If in doubt, throw it out.

- **It's best to keep produce cool.** Most fruits and vegetables will last longest if refrigerated. Onions, potatoes, hard squash, garlic, tomatoes and bananas can be stored on the countertop or in the pantry.
- **Eggs, meats, poultry, fish and most dairy products go bad quickly.** Use these as quickly after buying them as you can, and be sure the foods are refrigerated or frozen according to the dates.
- **Bread is best stored on the countertop or frozen (keeps 2-3 months if frozen).** Freshly baked bread will go stale faster than store-bought bread.

Organize your pantry items with dates in mind. Move items with dates that are about to pass the front of the shelf. This will remind you to use these items sooner.

We hope the tips and tools provided in this guide will help you and your family enjoy healthier food and save money, too. For more resources about healthier eating, cooking, shopping and recipes, visit [heart.org/recipes](http://heart.org/recipes).



This sample grocery list can help you make healthier choices when you shop. Add the quantity you need next to each item, and check if you have a coupon. Planning ahead will help you save time and money!

Remember to compare labels and choose products with the lowest amount of sodium, added sugars, saturated fat and trans fat that you can find in your store.

Fresh Vegetables	Quantity	Coupon
Asparagus	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broccoli	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carrots	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cauliflower	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Celery	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corn	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cucumbers	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lettuce/Greens	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Onions	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Peppers	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Potatoes	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spinach	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Squash	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sweet potatoes	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tomatoes	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Zucchini	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>

Fresh Fruits	Quantity	Coupon
Apples	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Avocados	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bananas	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Berries	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cherries	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grapefruit	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grapes	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kiwifruits	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lemons/Limes	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Melon	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Oranges	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Peaches	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pears	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plums	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>

Canned/Dry Beans	Quantity	Coupon
Black beans	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chickpeas	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kidney beans	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lima beans	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pinto beans	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
White beans	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>

Frozen Vegetables	Quantity	Coupon
Broccoli	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cauliflower	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corn	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Green beans	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed vegetables	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spinach	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>

Frozen Fruits	Quantity	Coupon
Berries	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cherries	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed fruit	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Peaches	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>

Canned Vegetables	Quantity	Coupon
Corn	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Green beans	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed vegetables	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Peas	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tomatoes	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tomato paste/sauce	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yams	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>

Canned/Jarred/Dried Fruits	Quantity	Coupon
Apple sauce	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Apricots	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dates	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed fruit	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Oranges	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Peaches	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pineapple	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prunes	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Raisins	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>

Whole Grains	Quantity	Coupon
Bread	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brown rice	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cereal	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Couscous	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Oatmeal	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pasta	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quinoa	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tortillas	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>

Fresh/Frozen Meat & Seafood	Quantity	Coupon
Chicken breasts	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lean ground beef/turkey	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Salmon	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
White fish fillets	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>

Canned/Pouched Meat & Seafood	Quantity	Coupon
Chicken	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Salmon	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tuna	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>

Pantry Staples	Quantity	Coupon
Nut butters (peanut, almond)	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nuts (almonds, walnuts)	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Salsa	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Soups and broths	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spaghetti sauce	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>

Cooking/Baking Essentials	Quantity	Coupon
Olive Oil	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flour (whole wheat)	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-stick cooking spray	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Canola or corn oil	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vinegars	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>

Herbs/Spices & Seasonings*	Quantity	Coupon
Basil	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cilantro	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Garlic	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mint	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parsley	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pepper (black, cayenne, red)	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Salt-free seasoning blends	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>

Dairy (Low-fat/Fat-free)	Quantity	Coupon
Cheese	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eggs/egg whites	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Milk	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yogurt	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>

Cleaning Supplies & Miscellaneous	Quantity	Coupon
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	—	<input type="checkbox"/>

Look for the Heart-Check mark to quickly and easily identify foods that can be part of an overall healthy eating pattern.



\*To keep fresh herbs and spices longer, learn some storage tips here:  
<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/cooking-skills/preparing-tis-the-seasonings>



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Learn more at  
[heart.org/HealthyForGood](https://heart.org/HealthyForGood)

