

A GUIDE TO HELP PLAN, PURCHASE & PREPARE YOUR OWN HEALTHY FOOD.

FOOD SENSE

| HEALTHY MEALS ON A BUDGET |

You'll be surprised at how
affordable, delicious & convenient
your own meals can be!

the
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Learn To Live

Anne Arundel County Department of Health
www.LearnToLiveHealthy.org

The Great Plate:

Here are tips for building a low-cost meal.

Whole grains, vegetables, fruits, low-fat dairy products and lean protein foods contain the nutrients you need — without extra sugar and fat.

Fruits & Vegetables

Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.

Eat red, orange and dark green vegetables (such as tomatoes, sweet potatoes and broccoli) in main and side dishes. Eat fruit, vegetables or unsalted nuts as snacks, nature's original fast foods.

Best Choice — Dining In!

What's cheaper and just as quick as convenience foods? Dining in! Here's a basic plan for healthy 30-minute dinners.

- ♥ Choose many colorful vegetables.
- ♥ Add a serving of lean meat, fish, poultry or beans.
- ♥ Add a whole grain such as brown rice or whole-grain pasta.
- ♥ Add low-fat cheese.
- ♥ Season simply with herbs. Caution with butter and salt.
- ♥ Bake, broil, steam or stir fry your combination.
- ♥ Top off your meal with fruit or a salad and low-fat milk.



What's on Yours?

Healthy and healthy plate:



Grains — Make at least half your grains whole. Choose 100% whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice and pasta. Check the ingredients list on packages to find whole-grain foods.

Dairy — Most dairy group choices should be fat-free or low-fat. Switch to fat-free (also called skim or non-fat) or low-fat (1%) milk, yogurt and cheese. (Same calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk. Less fat and calories.)

Proteins — Vary your protein food choices. Eat beans, which are a low-cost and natural source of fiber and protein. Keep meat and poultry portions small and lean.

PIZZA

Be your own pizza chef! Cook-It-Yourself Vegetable Pizza has about ½ cup of veggies per serving. Add all the veggies you want and make on whole grain pizza shells or dough, English muffins or tortillas.



← Delivered

Per Serving: \$1.76 | 270 Calories | 16g Fat



← Frozen

Per Serving: \$0.70 | 210 Calories | 9g Fat



← Cook-It-Yourself*

Vegetable Pizza

Per Serving: \$0.59 | 100 Calories | 4.5g Fat



Convenience Foods IS THE CO\$T WORTH IT?

TACOS

Tacos are easy to make at home. Try fillings such as beef, chicken, seafood, beans and veggies. Top with tomatoes, lettuce, onions, avocados and other veggies. Serve on corn taco shells or whole-wheat tortillas.



↗ Cook-It-Yourself*

Bean Taco

Per Serving: \$0.79 | 189 Calories | 9g Fat




Take Out ↑


Per Serving: \$2.12 | 287 Calories | 13g Fat





TOO MUCH SODIUM (SALT) ISN'T GOOD FOR YOUR HEART.

People over age 2 should have less than 2,300 mg of sodium a day (about a teaspoon of salt). If you are over 50, or African American, or have high blood pressure, diabetes or chronic kidney disease, you should have only 1,500 mg a day — about 2/3 teaspoon of salt — or 15  a day! Look at how much sodium is in these convenience foods!

 = 100mg of sodium.

STIR FRY

Cooking a stir fry at home provides unlimited options! Try with chicken or your favorite veggies. Serve over whole-wheat pasta or steamed brown rice for a low-sodium meal. Be heart healthy and cook at home.



BEST CHOICE
SEE THE SODIUM YOU'LL SAVE? A DAY'S WORTH!

➔ Cook-It-Yourself*

Vegetable and Beef Stir Fry
Per Serving: \$1.29 | 196 Calories | 11g Fat




Carry Out ➔

Per Serving: \$3.50 | 440 Calories | 14g Fat


CHICKEN & MORE

High-fat meals plus high-calorie drinks can clog arteries and add pounds. Cook delicious baked chicken at home. Serve with a medium baked potato, steamed broccoli and water for a complete healthy meal.



BEST CHOICE
BAKED CHICKEN AT HOME REDUCES THE FAT BY 92%.

➔ Cook-It-Yourself*

Baked Chicken Dinner
Per Serving: \$1.82 | 298 Calories | 3g Fat




➔ Drive-Thru

Per Serving: \$6.27 | 870 Calories | 37g Fat


*FIND THESE AND OTHER SIMPLE, DELICIOUS, COOK-IT-YOURSELF RECIPES
AAHEALTH.ORG/RECIPES.ASP

EATING YOUR P'S

Plan ahead before you shop.
Get the most value out of your budget.
And make healthy, cost-cutting meals.

Plan

to save money!

Read store fliers for weekly specials.

- Cut coupons from circulars or find them online. Try to combine them with items on sale.
- Be careful with coupons. Don't be tempted to buy things you don't need!

Plan your meals. Make your list.

- You can find quick, easy recipes online. (See Healthy Resources on back cover.)
- Check to see what foods you already have in stock and plan around those items. Add missing foods to your list.
- Think about doubling recipes and freezing half for later.

Go for:

- Lean meats. Fat-free and low-fat dairy items. Fresh, frozen or canned fruits and vegetables. Whole grains.
- Choose a variety of colors of fruits and vegetables. Purchase fruits and vegetables in season – usually lower in cost.

Have a budget. Know how much you can spend on food and stick to it!

PURCHASE

Get the biggest bags for your buck!

Stick to your list!

- * Avoid buying items on impulse.
- * Stay out of the aisles that don't contain items on your list.
- * Don't go shopping when you are hungry or rushed.

Be savings-hungry.

- * Ask about a loyalty card at your grocery store.
- * Buy store brands if cheaper.
- * Bulk items or family packs usually cost less. Buy and freeze portions you won't use right away.
- * Compare unit prices to get the best value (see back cover).

Do a little more, save a little more.

- * Pre-cut fruits and vegetables, individual cups of yogurt, instant rice and hot cereal are convenient but usually cost more.

PREPARE

Make your own convenience!

Now that you're home:

- Divide up large packages into smaller portions to freeze for later.
- Prepare healthy snacks to go. Wash, peel and cut produce so it's handy to grab and eat from the fridge.

Making your meals.

- No time? Some dishes can be prepped in advance and cooked on days when you have more time.
- Be sure you use your most perishable items soon to prevent spoiling.
- Use your leftovers. Work them into a meal later in the week.



GET THE
BEST VALUE
AT THE STORE

CALCULATE THE **UNIT PRICE**
and then compare prices between different
sizes, product brands and product forms
(e.g., fresh, frozen or canned).

IT'S JUST **3 EASY STEPS**

- 1 ▶ Find item price
- 2 ▶ Find item size
- 3 ▶ Item price ÷ Item size
= Unit price



ITEM PRICE	ITEM SIZE	UNIT PRICE
\$2.46	16 ounces	= \$0.15 per ounce

COMPARE THIS UNIT PRICE
WITH SIMILAR PRODUCTS.

REMEMBER:

- ▶ **Bigger packages** aren't always cheaper.
- ▶ **Generic or store brands** are often lower in price (but not always!).
- ▶ **Loyalty cards and coupons** can help save more.
- ▶ **Some stores already display** the unit price on the shelf—in front of the product, above the product or to the side of the product.
- ▶ **Unit price** does not provide nutritional quality information. Use the other tips in this booklet to help make healthy food choices.

*For more examples, see Healthy Resources below.**

HEALTHY RESOURCES

Anne Arundel County Department of Health, Learn To Live Program | www.LearnToLiveHealthy.org

Choose MyPlate | www.ChooseMyPlate.gov

* Iowa State University Extension, Choosing the Best Deal with Unit Prices

www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/page/online-lessons

More Matters | FruitsAndVeggiesMoreMatters.org

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Recipe Finder | snap.nal.usda.gov

USDA Team Nutrition Recipe Finder | healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/recipes

No endorsement of mentioned products or firms is intended nor is criticism implied of those not mentioned. All prices in this publication were collected in Maryland, Winter 2013. Although prices vary depending on date and location, the comparative differences generally follow a similar pattern.

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