



You can save money and still enjoy healthy, delicious food



Making smart choices saves money. Evaluate how you spend your money on food. What unnecessary items do you purchase? Do you eat out often? The first way to save money on food is to limit or cut out unnecessary food spending. Some specific ways to do this:

- **Cut the junk:** Evaluate how much money you are spending on items such as soda (regular or diet), cookies, crackers, prepackaged meals, processed foods, etc. Limit or completely cut out these unhealthy foods. Your wallet and your body will thank you.
- **Eat out less:** Even just reducing your meals out by 1 or 2 times per week can save you about \$15 - \$25 per week. This is an easy way to save money and even have some extra to spend on higher quality foods.
- **Stick to your grocery list:** The more prepared you are when you get to the store the less impulse purchases you will make. So write out a grocery list and stick to it!
- **Shop the perimeter of the store first:** This way you will fill your cart with healthy whole foods like fresh produce and meat, leaving less room for the "junk food fillers" and thus saving money.
- **Cook large portions ahead:** It saves time to cook once and eat multiple times. One idea is to make a big pot of soup at the beginning of the week or whenever you go food shopping. When you don't feel like cooking, help yourself to a hearty bowlful along with a green salad. This makes a nutritious but inexpensive lunch or dinner anytime.
- **Beware of hidden sugars:** Many packaged or processed foods contain high levels of hidden sugar. They may be easy to prepare and fill your family up for cheap, but too much sugar causes rapid swings in energy and blood sugar, and can contribute to many serious health problems. Hidden sugar may be listed as corn syrup, molasses, brown rice syrup, cane juice, fructose, dextrose, or maltose. Avoid foods such as instant mashed potatoes, white bread, canned soups, refined pasta, and sugary cereals. Satisfy your sweet tooth with naturally sweet food such as fruit, peppers, and sweet potatoes.

Know your good carbs from your bad carbs

Healthy carbs (sometimes known as good carbs) include whole grains, beans, fruits, and vegetables. Healthy carbs are digested slowly, providing long-lasting energy and keeping blood sugar and insulin levels stable.

Unhealthy carbs (or bad carbs) are foods such as white flour, refined sugar, and white rice that have been stripped of all bran, fiber, and nutrients. Unhealthy carbs digest quickly and cause spikes in blood sugar levels and only short-lived energy.

Article information provided by: helpguide.org

www.commonhealth.virginia.gov

The contents of the CommonHealth weekly emails may be reprinted from an outside resource in the area of health, safety, and wellness and is intended to provide one or more views on a topic. These views do not necessarily represent the views of the Commonwealth of Virginia, CommonHealth, or any particular agency and are offered for educational purposes. If you have questions or concerns about this article, please email us at wellness@dhrm.virginia.gov