



FOR CAREGIVERS

# Meal Planning on a Budget



## Map out your meals

Make a menu plan for the week and use it as a guide. Be sure to list beverages and snacks as well.



## Find balance

If you have veggies, dairy and protein at one meal, include fruit and grains in the next to cover all five food groups over the course of a day.



## Vary your protein

Choose different protein foods throughout the week. Try chicken, seafood, dried beans, peas, lentils, lean meat or eggs.



## Love your leftovers

Prepare enough of a dish to eat multiple times during the week. Try freezing in individual batches. Spice up your leftovers and serve them in new ways. For example, try leftover chicken in a stir-fry or over a garden salad, or to make chicken chili.



## Make a (grocery) list

Start by writing down all of the ingredients for the meals you plan to make. Be sure to cross off items you already have on hand. Buy a mix of fresh, frozen and shelf-stable items.



## Before you shop:

- Make a shopping list. This helps you stick to your budget.
- Plan your meals. Planning helps put leftovers to good use.
- Look for coupons, sales, and store specials. Check the local newspaper, online, and at the store.
- For added savings sign up for the store discount card.



## While you shop:

- Ask about a loyalty card for extra savings.
- Look for specials or sales on meat and seafood.
- Don't shop when you are hungry. It's easier to stick to your shopping list.
- Try store brands. They usually cost less.
- Check "sell by" dates. Buy the freshest food possible.
- Buy in bulk. It's almost always cheaper to buy foods in bulk. Smart choices are family packs of chicken, steak, or fish and larger bags of potatoes and frozen vegetables. Before you shop, remember to check if you have enough freezer space.



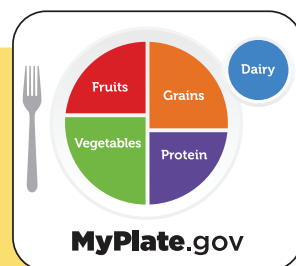
## After shopping:

- Store food right away to keep freshness.
- Freeze food to prevent spoiling.
- Divide foods into small portions to prevent waste.
- Use foods with the earliest expiration dates first.

## Collect low-cost, balanced recipes:

For help with menu planning and recipes, check the MyPlate website:

<https://www.myplate.gov/myplate-kitchen>





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## Tips for buying foods:

- **Breads and grains** - Look for deals on day-old bread. Buy regular rice, oatmeal, and grits instead of instant to save on money, sugar, and calories.
- **Vegetables** - Buy large bags of frozen vegetables. Seal tightly in the freezer. Avoid pre-bagged salad mixes to help keep costs down.
- **Fruits** - Buy fresh fruits in season. Frozen and canned fruits packed in water or 100% juice are a smart choice all year round.
- **Low-fat milk products** - Buy fresh, low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese in the largest size that can be used before spoiling. Larger containers cost less than smaller sizes. Ultra-pasteurized milk has a longer expiration date and won't spoil as fast.
- **Beans and meat** - Dried beans and peas are a good source of protein and fiber. Chuck or bottom round roast has less fat and is cheaper than sirloin. Look for specials at the meat counter. Buy meat in large, bulk packages to save money. Freeze portions you might not use right away to prevent spoiling.



## Grow your own food

Grow fresh vegetables, fruits and herbs in your home.



## Make it a family affair

Involve your family. Assign tasks to each member to make it a fun experience.



## Eating out occasionally can be fun!

Save money by going out for lunch instead of dinner, or looking for "2 for 1" deals. Stick to water instead of ordering other beverages.

## Ohio AAP PMP Mobile App

Search Parenting at Meal and Playtime on Apple Store or Google Play



## App Highlights...

- Physician-endorsed materials for parents to access on-demand
- Resources for parents organized by age
- Text reminders sent monthly and/or for age milestones
- Easy sign-up
- Videos on feeding, play, nutrition and more



## Resources:

1. <https://www.myplate.gov/tip-sheet/meal-planning>
2. <https://www.myplate.gov/eat-healthy/healthy-eating-budget/make-plan>
3. <https://www.myplate.gov/myplate-kitchen>
4. [https://richland.osu.edu/sites/richland/files/imce/Program\\_Pages/SNAP-Ed/DGTipsheet16EatingBetterOnABudget.pdf](https://richland.osu.edu/sites/richland/files/imce/Program_Pages/SNAP-Ed/DGTipsheet16EatingBetterOnABudget.pdf)

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