

Shopping Tips

Do you want to learn how to make shopping easier and save money while doing it? Here are some tips to get you started.



-  Shop when you are not tired or hungry.
-  Shop when you do not have to take children with you.
-  Make a grocery list and stick to it when you shop.
-  Look at weekly grocery ads and plan your meals based on sale items.
-  Read the Nutrition Facts on the food label to find food with the most nutrition for your money. Reading the Nutrition Facts helps you compare the fat, calories, fiber, sodium and sugar found in foods. The Nutrition Facts tells you the serving size and how many servings are in a package.
-  Compare products carefully. Brand name foods are usually not the best buy. Store brands and value brands are often less expensive and taste just as good.
-  Unit pricing can help you find the best buy. Unit prices for food are sometimes displayed on labels posted on the store shelves below the food. A unit price tells you how much the food costs per ounce, pound or piece. Unit pricing can be used to compare the cost of different size packages.
-  Large packages are usually less expensive than smaller packages. Use unit pricing to help you decide which is a better buy. Remember that a larger package is not a better buy if you will not use it all before it goes bad.
-  Buy fruits and vegetables in season for best quality and lowest prices. Frozen, canned and dried fruits and vegetables are also good choices.

Know how. Know now.



Stock-up on sale items only if they are foods you regularly use and if you have room to store them.



Compare convenience foods to foods you can fix yourself.
For example:

- A block of cheese may cost less than grated or sliced cheese.
- Refrigerated or canned juices are generally more expensive than frozen juice concentrate.
- Whole chickens are usually less expensive than cut-up or chicken parts.



Always check freshness dates on foods. Never buy out-dated food.



Do not buy broken packages, dented and bulging cans, cracked jars or items with lids that do not fit correctly. These items might be unsafe to eat.



Shop for eggs carefully. Open the egg carton and check the eggs. Buy only eggs that are clean and un-cracked.



Put foods like chicken and meat in separate plastic bags so juice does not drip on other foods in the shopping cart. The juice from raw meat and chicken can drip on ready-to-eat foods, like fruits and vegetables, and make you sick.



If you can see through frozen packages, look for frost or ice crystals. Ice crystals could mean the food was thawed and re-frozen or has been stored for a long time.

Sources: Michigan State University, Eating Right Is Basic 3rd Edition, Making the Most of Your Food Dollars Virginia Cooperative Extension, Healthy Futures: Stretching Food Dollars and Food Stamps