

HOW TO EAT HEALTHY ON A BUDGET

We all know how hard it is to keep that number on the cash register at the grocery store under your budget. How do you manage to do that, buy healthy foods, and even cut costs during tough times like these? Well, it may be easier than you think. First of all, although the media would like you to believe that unless you are eating organic you are putting your general health in major jeopardy, it's simply just not true. There is some truth to these comments, but what you need to keep in mind is buying the RIGHT organic foods. The following tidbits of information will outline ways you can make changes to your daily food buying and eating habits to not only kick start a healthier lifestyle, but save money while doing so!

- **PLAN!** Plan your meals before going to the store. Know what you are going to buy and stick to it! This eliminates having to get rid of spoiled food because you didn't have the time to eat it or changed your mind about what to eat. Limit your options and you have to stick to what you buy!
- **PREPARE!** Prepare by planning, implementing, and properly handling your food. Thoroughly wash your food before eating it, let veggies and fruits soak in tap water, remember to bring your reusable canvas bags to the grocery store. Prep your meals for the following day the night before. Make lunch, snacks, and dinner preparations. This will save you time in the long run and make you more accountable for what you eat during the day. The better prepared you are the healthier you will eat and the more money you will save.
- Buy healthy snacks and spread your meals out into several smaller portions. This will help boost your metabolism and keep you satisfied throughout the day.
- Don't eat out, and if you do make wise choices! Pack your lunch and snacks! Eating out is potentially one of the most detrimental things you can do for your health. Restaurants use too many un-needed salts, fats, sauces, sugars, and empty calories that pack the fat on! Not to mention how expensive it is to eat out! Use your leftovers and don't let them go to waste. Take last night's dinner for lunch or a snack and save yourself even more money. You can also do yourself a big favor and cook breakfast at home. This is the most important meal of the day and you can find healthy balance by making your own granola cereals, whole wheat pancakes with natural syrup, and many varieties of eggs. Just remember, go natural, leave out the added sugars and high fructose corn syrup, and get your whole grains!
- Know what organic products to buy. Peppers, Apples, Peaches, Celery, Lettuce, Strawberries, Grapes, and Pears should all be purchased organic. The reason for this is that these fruits and vegetables don't have protective coverings shielding them from the harmful pesticides and chemicals used in present day farming. If you can, buy locally at a farmers market to help support your local economy, purchase fresh healthy products, and save money by buying direct. When buying meats look for grass fed or free range beef. You can save money by getting the higher fat cuts and taking the extra time to trim skin, visible fat, and excess meat from the cut before cooking it.
- Buy in bulk. Use fermenting, drying, and freezing processes to keep foods fresh and healthy throughout the year. By buying in bulk you realize up to 25% savings and you limit carbon emissions from frequent trips to the market.
- Start a garden, even if it's a window garden. Not only will you save money by growing your own food, but you know it is healthy too!
- Drink more water, tap water! Usually tap water contains healthy chemicals such as fluoride that bottled water lacks. By drinking tap water you will save yourself money from the store by refraining from purchasing other drinks like juices, soda's, and their sugary friends.

Just follow these helpful tips and you will find your way to weight loss and monthly savings all at the same time!