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Stretch Your Food Dollars

Have you ever been told that eating healthy is expensive? Although sometimes this can be true, the key to eating healthy inexpensively is knowing tips and tricks to get the best for less! There are many ways to save money on the foods that you eat. The three keys to follow are planning before you shop, purchasing the items at the best price, and preparing meals that stretch your food dollars. Here are **7 tips** to help you stretch your food dollars and get the most for your food budget:

1. **Plan:** What meals do you want to plan for dinner? Sit down and write out your list. Before you head to the store, take an inventory of everything you already have on hand to prevent purchasing things you already have at home. Include meals like stews, casseroles, or stir-fries, which “stretch” your meals further by bulking them up.
2. **Get the Best Price:** Look at your local grocery store’s weekly sales and ads! Ask about loyalty cards or any coupons you might miss.
3. **Compare and Contrast:** Is the small bottle of ketchup really cheaper? Locate the “Unit Price” on the shelf directly below the product. Use it to compare different sizes of the same product to determine which is really the better deal.
4. **Buy in Bulk:** Buying foods in bulk is almost always cheaper. Smart choices are family packs of chicken, steak, or fish and larger bags of potatoes and frozen vegetables.
5. **Buy in Season:** Buying fruits and vegetables in season can lower the cost and add freshness! Check out your local farmers’ market to find seasonal produce and help local vendors!
6. **Convenience Cost:** Purchasing convenience foods costs more than doing the work yourself. If time is your main struggle with eating healthy, convenience cost might be worth it for you. However, just know that does come with a heavier price tag.
7. **Year-Round Saving:** Certain foods are typically low-cost options all year round. Try beans for a less expensive protein source. For vegetables, buy carrots, greens, or potatoes. As for fruits, apples and bananas are a good choice.

Visit www.ChooseMyPlate.gov for more information on this topic. Katherine Pinto, EFNEP and SNAP-Ed Agent, kd Pinto@ksu.edu or 620-232-1930.

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Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

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