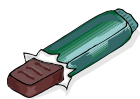


# Tips to Eating Wisely on a Limited Budget

Many people with mental illness are on a limited or fixed income, so budgeting is essential. The good news is that making healthy food choices actually can save money and improve a person's lifestyle at the same time. The result is not only better physical health but it can aid better fiscal health, too.

Here are some tips to share with participants on smart and healthy shopping and cooking.

## Think before you buy



unwanted calories.

Before you buy a candy bar from a vending machine or a bagel from a food cart, ask yourself, "Do I really need this?" and "Is this a good food choice?" Consider waiting 5 minutes until the urge passes. This may save you money and

## Make a grocery list before you shop



Look at ads and coupons to help you plan your list. What is on sale? What coupons do you have that would result in cost savings? Determine what you need and make your list accordingly.

## Buy fresh fruits and vegetables in season



Always look for fruits and vegetables that are in season, as they are fresh and more affordable. Some advertisements may have a section highlighting produce that is in season.

## Purchase foods in large amounts and then store the rest



If there is a great deal on a food item that can be stored in a container, in a refrigerator or in a freezer, buy more than you need and store the rest. Be careful, however, as it is easy to eat more than you need when you are faced with larger portions. Try measuring portions and storing each portion separately.

## Choose a shopping buddy and split the costs



Buying in bulk and dividing the items can save money. Perishable foods like fruits and vegetables often are less expensive when purchased in bulk. Plus, shopping with a buddy can be fun – just be sure neither of you are hungry when you shop!

## Buy store or generic brands



Store or generic brands usually are more affordable than name brands, and they can taste just as good and be just as nutritious for you. Reading the Nutrition Facts labels can help you compare similar items.

## Have dinner with friends



Sharing the cost of meals can save everyone money. Plus, preparing meals with others is more fun. You can use your friends as a support group to help you

keep your healthier eating habits and lifestyle.

Reference: Vreeland, B., Toto, A.M., Sakowitz, M. 2009. Choosing Wellness: Healthy Eating. *Solutions for Wellness*.