



Budget Eating

Finances are a concern for many. People have the misconception that eating healthier has to be really expensive. So let's see what we can do to live healthfully within our means.

First we must recognize that food is health! You can spend the money upfront on food or pay for medication in the long run. This becomes a choice. There are many areas of our life that we can look at changing to aid us in increasing our food budget. This will help us in saving extra money to purchase better quality milks and meats, etc.

Choose Real Foods

Many "foods" that people are considering staples these days provide the body with no nutrition and in fact can have negative implications on the body. To name a few diet sodas, Twizzlers, Cheetos, fruit chews and Cracker Jacks are not quality foods. These foods do not nourish the body and in fact add synthetics and unnecessary additives and preservatives to our bodies leading to many health problems.

So we need to focus on eliminating fake foods from the diet. This action alone will stretch our food budget to buy better quality foods.

Portions Count

Many of the pricier foods such as meats and dairy are nutritious but what is important to emphasize, is the amount we consume. When you focus on controlling portion sizes of foods consumed you can create many more meals.

The extra money you are spending on better quality bacon, you are saving by not eating 5 strips at one time. Bacon is an amazing food and a little goes a long way to add flavor and fat. The fat in the bacon will keep our bodies satisfied with less.

So using a couple strips to flavor a quiche or salad is a way to make a better health choice and also extends the food budget.

Focus on ways to use less of the real deal. Butter is the same way. A little bit of butter can really add a lot of flavor to a dish, a lot can ruin it.

Have the kids be your coupon clippers. Having them take an active role on getting food on the table teaches them a lot about the appreciation of a meal.

And remember the eating principles you have learned through Mediterranean Wellness. Serve yourself less than you think you want and take your time with your food. These strategies really do help with portion control.



Portions Count continued...

The more portions you get out of a food the better it is on the budget. So yes the better choice might cost 50 cents more but you are getting extra servings out of the food so in the end it becomes the better choice for health and budget.

Buy in Bulk

Buying a large tub of yogurt is cheaper than buying the smaller individualized serving. And you can control the portion you are going to eat.

When you can shop at a food co-op or a grocery store that has bins, this is usually a more cost effective way to buy grains, beans, nuts, etc.

You can also buy things in bulk and split them with a family member or friend.

Decrease Eating Out

In a recent article found in the New York Times author Mark Bittman compares a meal to feed 4 at McDonalds compared to buying wholesome ingredients and making the food at home.

The results speak for themselves. A meal feeding four from McDonalds was approximately \$28.00. This was compared to buying groceries at a store consisting of Chicken, vegetables, milk, oil, bread, and spices was around \$14.00. And the food purchased could feed more than four people and was the healthier choice.

To read the article in its entirety visit:

www.nytimes.com/2011/09/25/opinion/sunday/is-junk-food-really-cheaper.html?_r=1

We need to get back into the kitchen! Cooking can be done fast. Just recommit first to eating out less and cooking more in the home.

Buy in Season and Local

Local and in season produce is usually more nutritious, cost effective and tasty.



Decrease and Monitor Excess Spending

- Decrease purchasing coffees from a coffee shop and make your own cup at home.
- Borrow books and DVDs instead of buying them.
- Limit impulse shopping on clothes, shoes, accessories etc.
- Think about changing your cable package.
- Decrease buying excess toys for the kids; they would rather have the time with you anyways.
- Decrease purchasing processed foods.
- Be realistic with your cell phone plan.
- Shut off lights, fans, etc when not using them, every little bit helps!
- Limit car use when possible.
- Look at manicures and pedicures as a treat and not a necessity.
- Look at attending a sporting event or a movie as a treat and not a standard weekend activity.
- Host pot lucks instead of always going out to eat. And bring your lunch to work more often.
- Plan menus and go to grocery stores with a list. This will help to decrease impulse buying.
- Do you use your gym pass? If not cancel it and commit to exercising in the home or outside.
- Entertainment does not have to be expensive.
 - Have a themed dinner party.
 - Go on a picnic.
 - Take a hike.
 - Go blueberry picking.
 - Have friends over for dessert instead of always going out.
 - Make crafts with the kids.