

Does your budget make you want to eat peanut butter and Ramen noodles? Many people report that when they are cutting their budget, their first cuts are healthy foods, which for many seems like a splurge. Fortunately, you can still buy and enjoy nutritious foods without dipping deep into your wallet. Here are some ideas.

Precut fruits and vegetables cost more than whole. Cut your own carrots and onions, peel your own garlic, and slice your own apples. For the best prices, buy what produce is in season and on sale. If you want fruits and vegetables that are not in season, choose frozen or canned, just make sure there is not sodium or sugar added.

Make a big meal once and eat leftovers. It is easy to double or triple a recipe then freeze or refrigerate individual portions for later. A slow cooker can also be handy for cooking chili, stews or roast and to enjoy at dinner time.

Instead of eating out for lunch, make your own turkey wrap for less than \$1.00 per serving.

Cut your spending on foods that should be optional because they provide little nutritional value. These include sodas, chips and cookies. Have these treats only once or twice a week rather than every day. Spend grocery money on fruits and vegetables.

Identify your favorite treats and allow them in moderation. We can purchase a bag of chocolate kisses that can last a long time. One or two can be just as satisfying as a dozen if you take the time to enjoy them.

For healthy proteins, skip the bologna and choose tuna, eggs, beans, tofu and peanut butter. These cost a fraction of what you would pay for meat and most people can do with less meat in their diets.

Eliminate Bottled water and other bottled drinks. Use a refillable bottle to sip water all day, saving both money and calories.

Avoid paying for extra packaging for ready-to-eat snacks. Buy a large bag of pretzels or nuts then portion them out into small reusable containers for lunches and snacks.

Purchase store brand whole grain cereal or oats that you cook yourself rather than purchasing the more expensive brands.

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