

Let's Go Shopping!

2016 FCE Food & Nutrition Leader Lesson

Goal of Lesson:

- List ways to save money on groceries
- Understand the importance of price comparisons
- Names three ways to eat healthier on a budget

Additional Handouts:

- W327-A Quick Bites: Food Labels
- W327-B Quick Bites Unit Pricing
- W327-D Quick Bites: Meal Planning Saves \$\$\$
- W327-F Quick Bites: Coupons & Bargain Hunting

Lesson:

Q: Why don't cows have any money?

A: Because the farmers milk them dry.

Q: What book do women like the most?

A: Their husband's checkbook.

Some may tell you that money can't buy happiness...or maybe they simply just didn't know where to shop. As consumers, especially in today's society, we are always interested in ways to save money and get the most 'bang for our buck'.

In 2013, U.S. consumers, businesses, and government entities spent \$1.4 trillion on food and beverages in grocery stores and other retailers and on away-from-home meals and snacks (USDA, 2015). This also breaks down because in 2013, households in the middle income quintile spent an average of \$5,728 on food, representing 13.1 percent of income, while the lowest income households spent \$3,655 on food, representing 36.2 percent of income. With cost of food always rising and the tight budgets we all live on...making our money stretch is always important. This would be about \$500 dollars a month per house.

Gardening is one way to help save money when it comes to groceries. However, when gardening it's always important to remember what we put in greatly increases or decreases the probability of saving money this route. To maximize gardening saving, here are some tips:

- Find what grows well in your area
- Be aware of growing seasons, this can allow you to yield 2-3 crops instead of just one
- Grow vegetables that you like – it doesn't save you money to grow something you won't even eat!
- Think about easy storage – how hard/expensive is it to store the vegetables you're growing? If you have to spend a lot to store, it may not be worth it.
- Grow the expensive vegetables. Look at the most expensive vegetables in the grocery stores and compare prices of growing at home, if it's possible to grow from home, this can save you a lot of money. Especially if it's a favorite vegetable

(Haynes, 2009)

Smart shopping can not only save you money but provide highly nutritious foods. Coupon clipping is a great way to save money as well, the most important piece to remember is that coupons only save you money if you were going to spend money on that item in the first place. Many stores are now also accepting offers from other stores. For example – Wal-Mart matches prices as long as you have the sale paper with you. Call in advance to find out if your store will match prices or sales. Here are some additional ways to help save money and eat more nutritiously all year long.

- Buy frozen – fresh fruits and vegetables can run up cost in the winter; if you purchase them frozen they still provide the same nutrients. With frozen foods you can also purchase in bulk and store until you need them.
- Buy canned – this can be stored until needed; just be sure to purchase the 'no salt added' and/or 'canned in natural juices' products. Finding additional salts or artificial storage juices provides a lot of extra sodium and preservatives that add calories...not to mention additional costs!
- Compare cost – sometimes it's less cost if you cut the vegetables/fruit yourself and sometimes it's not! Check! If it saves you money, spend a little extra time cutting your own produce.
- Check Unit Pricing – we are under the misconception that less is more, or more is less. Check the unit price on the food items you're buying before making a decision on which to purchase. Bulk can save you money, or make you spend more. Watch this carefully!

- Check Brands – while we all love name brand, sometimes we can use the store brand and gain the same taste for a much cheaper alternative.
- Cook fresh – eating out or premade meals can be nice, but they also add up quickly!
 - If the average families spends \$500 on their groceries a month; that would mean if you eat out twice a week and spend a total of around \$20 per person on those meals...eating those two meals alone would cost \$1,120 – over double!
- Cook fresh.2 – fruits and vegetables can be steamed, chilled, blanched, microwaved, baked, broiled, or eaten raw. Be creative and don't forget about spices to compliment a basic meal.

To save money when at the grocery store, it's important to remember they design the stores to get you to spend money. Notre Dame says that "The entryway is designed to be inviting so it reinforces a positive customer retail response. Most managers place their sensory departments, including the bakery, produce and florist at the front of the store. These departments are known to activate the shopper's salivary glands through sight, smell and taste, which entice them to spend money on things that weren't necessarily on their list" (Learning House Administration, 2013). Most stores also are sure to "stock the items shoppers buy most often at the back of the store, forcing them to travel through other tempting aisles to pick up the essentials" (Learning House Administration, 2013). This increases the store's profits while emptying your pockets!

The most significant thing you can do is to shop off a grocery list. This will cut down impulse buys. Also to avoid impulse purchasing, be sure to shop on a full stomach! Plan out your route through the store according to your list of needs. Most stores also have floor layout plans that can assist you in planning your grocery shopping trip.

Lastly, there is a large focus on living a healthier life. One of the primary focuses is on eating better foods. With such focus on eating healthy, a commonly heard excuse is that the healthier options equal higher cost. Using coupons, price comparison and shopping in season can all help with reducing cost to eating healthy but here are a couple additional suggestions.

1. Make weekly meals off the sales and specials grocery stores are having during that time period.
2. Use what you have on hand, and add to that instead of starting from scratch when meal planning.
3. Ask for rain checks! If the sale item is gone, ask for a rain check and then get the same price at a later date.

4. Doubling the recipe can save you money! If a lot of one ingredient is on sale, buy a little extra, or cook that little extra to save for a meal on another day.
5. Use leftovers!
6. Remember, one bag of potatoes (10 lbs.) can run you about \$5 and can feed around 20 people. If an average family is 3-4 people...that is several meals! While they might cost a little more on the front end, they can feed a lot more meals than a quick run through a drive-in or a box of pizza.
7. Price matching can also be a great consumer tool! Some consumers drive from store to store to purchase the best bargains from sale papers, however, this can increase the cost of gas and wear on your vehicle. Many stores will match the price of a competitor. Call ahead to find out which stores will honor the prices of sales, compile as much shopping into one trip to help save mileage!

No matter what tips or tools you use to save money, we hope that you find one or two ways to save a few extra dollars when out shopping for your family's needs!

Activity Options:

- **Recipe Swap** – have each member bring their families easiest/cheapest/most requested recipe to share with other members.
- **Menu Planning** – provide sale papers from past newspapers and a menu planning sheet for members to practice writing out a week's meals from the sale paper; alter their menus by giving the members various food items in their pantries to work with.

References:

- Learning House Administration (2013, January 4). *The psychology behind a grocery store's layout*. Retrieved from Notre Dame College Online: <http://online.notredamecollege.edu/psychology/the-psychology-behind-a-grocery-store%E2%80%99s-layout/>
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