

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR FOOD DOLLAR

Today's families are faced with more demands than ever. Time and money are two resources that no one ever seems to have enough of, so it's important to make the most of them. Approximately 14% or more of the average family's income is spent on food.

There are a few simple things you can do to stretch your food dollar.

- **Pre-planning saves food dollars.** Try to plan meals for one week in advance. This will also help ensure that you are selecting healthier foods when you shop, rather than impulse purchasing of foods that are high in fat and sugar. Limiting the number of trips made to the store each week will help reduce spending. Make a list and stick to it!
- **Stock up** on items that are on sale and that have an extended shelf life. Avoid spending money on sale items if they are not in your weekly meal plan.
- **Use coupons** whenever possible. Generic or store brands are good choices too because they usually cost less and have the same nutritional value as brand name items.
- Try **“batch cooking”** when time allows. Cooking large batches of main dishes, casseroles, etc. can save time and money if you utilize the leftovers for meals to take to work, quick meal fixes, etc.
- **Avoid convenience foods** when possible. Not only are they more expensive, but they are often high in sodium, fat and sugar.
- **Eat a healthy breakfast!** It is still the most important meal of the day and it will help keep you from snacking all day long.
- **Seek assistance if needed.** There are a variety of programs available to help families with food needs. Contact your county Extension office, social services, clergy, or the local food bank for more information about programs that may be available to help you.
- **Build family time into meal time.** Try to eat meals together as a family unit. This will help encourage open communication and reduce stress.

Source: “Stretching Your Food Dollar” South Dakota State University

University of Arkansas, United States Department of Agriculture, County Governments Cooperating

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