

Eat healthy on a budget

Eating healthy food doesn't need to break your wallet. It just takes planning. Here are some tips:

- Plan your meals and make a list before you shop.
- Fill your cart with the basics first—vegetables, fruit, protein and milk. Don't even go in the aisles with chips or cookies.
- Plan for at least two meals each week to be leftovers.
- Clip coupons and take advantage of sales.
- Many supermarkets have free loyalty card programs that offer discounts to card holders. Get a card for the store(s) you use most often.
- Buy fresh fruits and vegetables in season. Frozen or canned vegetables are healthy and often a good value.
- Try to minimize waste. Shop often for perishable items and buy in smaller quantities that you will be able to finish before they spoil.
- Prepare most of your meals at home.

- Beans (canned or dried) are an inexpensive and healthy source of protein.
- Eggs are another excellent inexpensive source of protein. Use two eggs per serving as a main dish.
- Use recipes that will "stretch" expensive food items (stews, casseroles, stir-fried dishes).
- Try generic brands and store brands of healthy cereals, brown rice, diet beverages and breads.
- Buy in bulk or family packages. Divide the food into smaller containers for storage; you'll use less.
- Pop your own popcorn and add herbs or grated cheese for a healthy, inexpensive snack.
- Buy food, not convenience. Buy heads of lettuce instead of prepackaged salads. Buy blocks of cheese instead of grated cheese.

www.choosemyplate.usda.gov/budget.html

Spend Smart Eat Smart,

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/>

Recipes of the Week: Vegetable side dishes

Lemon Swiss Chard

serves 4

- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 3 to 4 cloves garlic, sliced
- 1 head Swiss chard, washed and chopped in large pieces (try other greens like kale or collard greens)
- 2 teaspoons lemon zest, optional
- 2 Tablespoons lemon juice
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 Tablespoon balsamic vinegar

- Heat olive oil in large skillet over medium heat.
- Add sliced garlic and heat till slightly browned.
- Gradually add in chard. Add salt, sauté till wilted.
- Remove from heat; toss with lemon juice, zest if using, and balsamic vinegar.

Nutrition information:

Calories: 45 Total Fat: 2.5g Saturated Fat: 0g
Carbohydrates: 5g Dietary Fiber: 1.4g Protein: 1.75g

Raw Butternut Squash Slaw

serves 6

from Mark Bittman's Food Matters Cookbook

- 1/2 cup rinsed fresh or frozen cranberries
- 3/4 cup orange juice
- 1 tablespoon minced ginger
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon honey
- Salt and black pepper
- 1 squash (about 1.5 lbs.) peeled and seeded

- Combine cranberries, orange juice and ginger in a small pot over medium-low heat. Cover; cook, stirring occasionally, until berries begin to break, 10 minutes or so. Remove from heat. Add oil, honey and salt and pepper. Stir to combine well.
- Grate squash. Place in a large bowl and add warm dressing. Toss to combine. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Nutrition information:

Calories: 152 Total Fat: 7g Saturated Fat: 1g
Carbohydrates: 24g Dietary Fiber: 5.4g Protein: 1.6g

Tip of the Week:

Plan a fitness party with your friends over the holidays! Have people bring items to swap or loan, such as exercise DVDs, weights, gently used clothes and the like. Hire an instructor to teach you zumba or belly dancing. Plan contests, games, and fitness-theme prizes. Check out www.stepaheadprogram.com for healthy recipes to serve.

-- ideas from www.sparkpeople.com