

# “I need to eat healthier, but it can be expensive. How do I eat healthy on a tight budget?”

Eating healthy is important to your mental and emotional health as well as your physical wellbeing. Along with a lack of time, having a limited budget is one the major barriers to eating a healthy diet.



It can be a challenge to eat nutritious meals that are both wholesome and affordable. But you don't have to break the bank to eat well. Here are some useful tips to help you eat healthy on a tight budget.

## Tips:

- Limit the amount you eat out at restaurants.
- Plan meals ahead of time.
- Keep a supply of staples like olive oil, flour, dried herbs and spices, canned tomatoes and stock or broth.
- Make a list before going to the grocery store and stick to it.
- Plan around sales, check ads and use coupons.
- Cook large meals and freeze half or plan for leftovers during the week.
- Limit processed foods, like soda, cookies and prepackaged meals, and buy more whole foods, like fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables, or a can of plain beans instead of refried beans.
- Buy foods in bulk.
- Buy generic or store brands.
- Buy other sources of protein than meat.
  - Try replacing half the meat in dishes such as chili, meatloaf or burger patties with beans, finely minced mushrooms, or chopped vegetables.
- Freeze in-season fruits and vegetables or buy frozen.
- Be aware that convenience costs more. You can often save money if you are willing to do a little work.
  - Buy whole chickens and cut them into parts
  - Buy a block of cheese and shred or grate it yourself
  - Avoid instant rice or instant oatmeal

## Additional Nutritional and Financial Support

Sometimes relying on a budget is not enough to ensure you and your family are able to eat healthy. There are resources and programs available to help individuals and families that may need food assistance.

- Check to see where your local or closet food bank is by **calling 211** or visiting [www.FeedingAmerica.org](http://www.FeedingAmerica.org)
- To see a list of resources available in Massachusetts, visit Massachusetts State website at: [www.mass.gov/topics/food-assistance](http://www.mass.gov/topics/food-assistance)
- To see a list of all national food assistance programs, visit The U.S. Department of Agricultural at: [www.nutrition.gov/topics/food-assistance-programs](http://www.nutrition.gov/topics/food-assistance-programs)

