

# Shopping Tips—Stretch Your Food Dollars



## Before You Shop

- Know how much money you have to spend—bring a calculator on your shopping trip.
- Keep a running shopping list at home.
- Check what food you have on hand.
- Plan your meals and snacks using advertised specials.
- Plan less expensive, more nutritious foods for snacks. See the Tip Box, **Snacks**, below.
- Plan meals for 1 or 2 weeks. Fewer trips to the store saves money.
- Look for things on sale—stock up if possible (freeze for later use).
- Plan some meals that use leftovers. See the Tip Box, **Planned Leftovers**, below.
- Plan some meals around less expensive meat options (example: eggs, tuna or dry beans).
- Only clip coupons for items you normally use.
- Eat before you shop to avoid impulse buying.
- Shop alone if possible. If shopping with children, see the Tip Box, **Shopping with Children**, below.

## While You Shop

- Remember—supermarkets exist to make money.
- Look up and down—keep in mind the more expensive items may be at eye level.
- Compare prices (look at price per ounce). Try store brands, they often cost less.
- If using a coupon, make sure the item is cheaper than the store brand item without a coupon.
- Buy only what is on your list.
- Check sell-by dates to get food that will keep longer.
- Buy in bulk if cheaper and if you can use it before it spoils.
- Limit empty calorie foods such as pop, cookies and chips.
- Be aware of tie-in items (example: caramel sauce next to the apples).



## After You Shop

- Refrigerate or freeze foods as soon as you return home from shopping.
- Divide up bulk items into smaller packages before freezing, such as meats.
- Use leftovers in a day or two or freeze for later use.
- Use fresh foods first because they don't keep as long as packaged foods.

### Snacks

- Dry cereal
- Plain crackers
- Peanut butter
- Fruit
- Hard cooked eggs
- Popcorn

### Planned Leftovers

#### Chili

- Chili macaroni
- Chili topped baked potatoes

#### Chicken

- Chicken hot dish
- Chicken noodle soup

### Shopping with Children

- Give children a task while shopping. For example, crossing items off the grocery list as they go into the cart.
- Play the ABC Game – have them point out a food that begins with A then work your way through the alphabet.  
A – apple, B – bread, C – cereal



**Want more help?**  
**Find the Nutrition Education**  
**Assistant nearest you at**  
**[www.extension.umn.edu/nutrition](http://www.extension.umn.edu/nutrition).**



