



SHOPPING LIST

With thousands of foods to choose from, how can you get the most nutrition from your food dollar? A smart shopper plans ahead and knows exactly what to buy. A smart shopper knows marketing techniques that may encourage spending beyond the shopping plan. Food shopping on a budget takes planning. Follow these steps to get the most for your money:

Step 1: Make a food budget.

- ✗ Determine how much money, including food stamps, you have to spend on food. Make a monthly food budget.
- ✗ If you shop once a week, divide your monthly food budget by 4 to find out how much you can spend on food each week.
- ✗ If you plan to buy nonfood items, such as dish soap, bathroom tissue, and pet food, at the grocery store, be sure to budget some money for these items. If possible, shop for non-food items on a regular basis at stores where you can get the lowest price for your needs. Do not forget to consider the distance you live from these locations when calculating your budget.

Step 2: Plan meals and snacks for your family for a week.

- ✗ Check what foods you have on hand. Plan to use these foods.
- ✗ Check newspaper ads or store flyers for weekly specials.
- ✗ Plan to use leftovers for other meals during the week.

- ✗ Be sure to include foods from all food groups in the USDA Food Guidance System.
- ✗ Include meatless meals to stretch out your protein dollars.

Step 3: Make a shopping list of the foods you need to make the meals on your menu.

- ✗ Organize your shopping list by category to match the store's layout. For example, the produce department, dairy case, meat counter, and grocery shelves.
- ✗ Check to see if you have coupons for foods on your list.
- ✗ To save time, keep a piece of paper near the refrigerator and write down items as you need them. This will help cut down on your number of trips to the store.

Step 4: Review your shopping list and budget.

- ✗ Will this shopping list fit into your budget?
- ✗ Where can you cut costs?
- ✗ Did you write breakfast foods on your list?
- ✗ Did you write foods for lunches on your list?
- ✗ Did you write foods for snacks on your list?
- ✗ Remember to list any staple foods (sugar, flour, meal, vegetable oil, seasonings, etc.) that you will need to buy.

- ✗ If you need a certain amount of an item for a recipe, write the amount on your list by the item (example: tomato sauce - 6 ounce can).
- ✗ If an item is advertised at a special price, write the price next to the item on your list.

There are many reasons you should make a list before going to the grocery store:

1. When you have a list, you do not have to “remember” what to buy. Without a list, you may have to go back to the store to pick up something you forgot.
2. Sticking to a list keeps you from buying things you do not need.
3. When you carry a list, you spend less time in the grocery store and are less tempted to buy “impulse” items. Often, impulse items, such as candy, magazines, toys, and gadgets, are located near the checkout lines in stores.

When you make your shopping list, be sure to include foods from all of the food groups in the USDA Food Guidance System. Use this list as a guide:

Bread, Cereal, Rice, and Pasta Group

- ✗ Rolled oats are highly nutritious and economical.
- ✗ Day-old bread is a good buy – you can use it quickly or freeze it.

Vegetable Group/Fruit Group

- ✗ Buy vegetables and fruits in season to save money. However, sometimes canned or frozen versions are cheaper, especially if they are on sale.
- ✗ Buy plain frozen vegetables rather than those with special sauces.

Milk, Yogurt, Cheese, and Other Calcium Sources Group

- ✗ Non-fat dry milk often is cheaper than fluid milk, and it is just as good for you.

- ✗ Dried milk has a long shelf life.
- ✗ Adding ice cubes to milk mixed from dry milk improves the taste.

Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs, and Nuts Group

- ✗ Luncheon meats, or cold cuts, usually are an expensive form of meat.
- ✗ Cold cuts usually are higher in fat than hamburger and regular cuts, such as roasts and chops.
- ✗ Economical sources of protein to include in your meal plan are dried beans and peas, eggs, peanut butter, and canned tuna.

Using Coupons

Remember to save coupons only for products you already use. You can use coupons with food stamps to stretch your food dollar. Check these items on the coupons you use:

- ✗ **The expiration date.** A few stores will let you use coupons even if the coupon has expired. Also, try to hold the coupon until the item is on sale for additional savings.
- ✗ **The brand.** You often can save more money by switching brands instead of using coupons.
- ✗ **Key words.** Watch for size, variety, or number to buy. For example, “Save 40¢ on 2.”
- ✗ **The UPC number for the scanner.** The scanner “knows” when the product has not been purchased or the restrictions on the coupon have not been met.
- ✗ **Details,** like if you can use the coupon in combination with other coupons.

Writing a Shopping List

After planning the meals and snacks for your family, the next step is to write a shopping list. Use these guidelines:

- ✗ Write down all the foods you will need to fix the meals and snacks you have planned.
- ✗ Go back over your list and cross out any foods you already have on hand and plan to use.

- ✗ Remember to list any staple foods (such as sugar, flour, meal, vegetable oil, and seasonings) that you need to buy.
- ✗ If you need a certain size package for a recipe, write the size on your list by the item.
- ✗ If an item is advertised at a special price, write the price next to the item on your list.

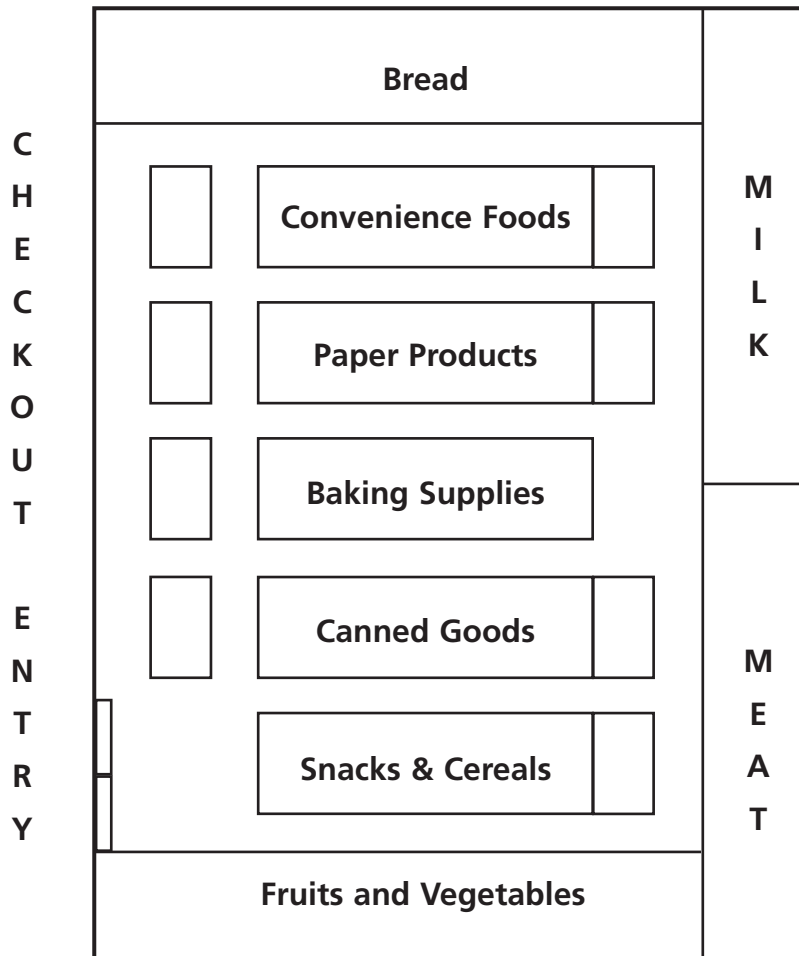
Lesson Summary

- ✗ Remember to look for grocery store marketing strategies. The more we are aware of these strategies and understand them, the less power they have over us.

- ✗ Compare products to get the best buy. Be sure to read the labels to get the best nutritional value.
- ✗ Shop with a list to save time and money.

Adapted from: "Eat Well For Less," Colorado State Cooperative Extension Service; "Shop Smart! Supermarket Shopping in the 1990's," University of Idaho Cooperative Extension System; Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program, New Hampshire Nutrition Education Program; Virginia Cooperative Extension Service; University of Florida Cooperative Extension Service; North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service.

SAMPLE GROCERY STORE LAYOUT



HEALTHY SHOPPING CHECKLIST

Vegetables

- lettuce
- spinach
- tomatoes
- cucumbers
- bell peppers
- mushrooms
- avocado
- carrots
- celery
- broccoli
- zucchini
- squash
- eggplant
- kale, collards, etc.
- cauliflower
- cabbage
- corn
- herbs _____
- onions
- garlic
- potatoes
- tofu
- other _____

Fruits

- strawberries
- raspberries
- blueberries
- bananas
- apples
- pears
- peaches
- plums
- watermelon
- cantaloupe
- honeydew
- pineapple
- oranges
- grapefruit
- lemons/limes
- grapes
- kiwi
- other _____

Packaged

- baked tortilla chips
- baked potato chips
- whole grain crackers

Cereal

(Buy whole grain cereal with >5 g fiber and <10 g sugar per serving.)

- shredded wheat
- oatmeal
- other _____

Canned

- tomatoes*
- tomato paste*
- tomato sauce*
- pasta sauce*
- hominy*
- black beans*
- pinto beans*
- cannelloni beans*
- garbanzo beans*
- kidney beans*
- low-fat soup*
- chicken broth*
- canned fruits in juice
- applesauce
- canned vegetables*
- tuna fish in water*
- parmesan cheese

Dried

- beans
- lentils
- brown rice
- macaroni
- lasagna
- fettuccini/linguini
- spaghetti
- penne
- barley
- corn meal
- raisins
- walnuts
- almonds
- vanilla extract
- baking powder
- baking soda
- cocoa powder
- prune puree
- peanut butter*
- herbs _____
- spices _____
- vegetable oil spray

Condiments

- light ketchup
- mustard
- relish
- light soy sauce
- balsamic vinegar
- vinegar _____
- Worcestershire
- fat-free mayo
- reduced-calorie syrup
- low-fat salad dressing
- light jam
- light chocolate syrup

Bread

- 100% whole wheat
- whole-wheat pitas
- low-fat tortillas
- corn tortillas

Dairy

- fat-free light yogurt
- low-fat cheese
- skim milk
- fortified soy milk
- orange juice w/ calcium
- non-fat ricotta cheese
- non-fat sour cream

Frozen

- veggie burgers
- vegetable medley*
- peas with carrots
- plain corn
- frozen fruits
- rice & stir-fry medley
- spinach/kale
- winter squash
- Brussels sprouts
- blackeye peas
- lima beans

Poultry/Fish

- turkey breast
- chicken breast
- fish/shrimp



Shopping Tips

- Copy this list and use it to plan meals and create a shopping list.
- Plan your meals around vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and beans instead of meats. For example, try pastas, stir-fries, salads, soups, chili, and baked potatoes.
- Fill half your cart with produce (fresh, frozen, or canned).
- Experiment with new vegetables, new pasta shapes, and new grains.



Distributed by **Deborah Little, Ed.D.**, Extension Family Nutrition Program Coordinator.

Funded by USDA's Food Stamp Program and the Mississippi Department of Human Resources.

Mississippi State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation or group affiliation, age, disability, or veteran status.

Publication 2377
 Extension Service of Mississippi State University, cooperating with U.S. Department of Agriculture. Published in furtherance of Acts of Congress, May 8 and June 30, 1914. **VANCE H. WATSON**, Interim Director (POD-11-05)

*Compare brands to find low-salt items.