

Family & Consumer Focus

Winter 2009

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\$aving on Your Food Dollar\$

When money is tight, food is one expense you can adjust. With a little knowledge and planning, you can get more meals for your money. Try these strategies to get the most from your food dollars:

- Plan meals and snacks for a week ahead. Make a list of what you need to buy; estimate the cost to know if you have enough money to last the week. Your local University of Illinois Extension office has spending guidelines for thrifty food plans.
- Shop from a list based on planned menus. Check the food ads for good buys. Coupons may help you save money if they are for nutritious items you need. Two websites that allow you to print coupons are www.Coupons.com and www.SmartSource.com. However, some stores do not accept coupons from the internet. Local newspapers often have an insert with coupons that are honored at stores.
- Go shopping as few times as possible. Frequent trips often lead to buying extra items. Shop alone, if possible. Your children may want items that are not on your list. Don't shop when you are hungry—everything looks good when your stomach is growling. Avoid shopping in a hurry because you may overlook the best buys.
- Use low-cost protein foods like dry beans, eggs, turkey, chicken, and peanut butter. Hamburger and liver are good buys in red meats. Large roasts can be cut up and used in different ways for more than one meal. Stretch meats by using them in sauces or casseroles. Use slow cooking and/or marinating to tenderize less expensive cuts of meat.
- Use reconstituted nonfat dry milk for cooking instead of whole milk. Dry milk is equally nutritious, and it is often less expensive.
- Turn leftovers into “planned overs.” You can sometimes get two meals for the price of one. Store cooked foods properly to make them last longer. Freeze them if you have the space.
- Take advantage of free or reduced-price school lunch programs.
- Where available, use fish and wild game.

Get more money-saving tips at <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/toughtimes>

Make Body and Mind Health Your Top Priority for 2009

Shirley Camp, Extension educator, nutrition and wellness

Good nutrition is vital to keep us healthy—that's not breaking news. Yet even though we know what we should eat, often we fail to do so.

For example, we know that for more than 50 years, heart disease has been the Number 1 cause of death for Americans. And, strokes have been the Number 3 cause of death. So, it's obvious that taking care of our heart should be a high priority.

Still, knowing all of this, we typically consume a diet high in cholesterol, fats, and salt. We also skimp on the fiber and consume little seafood, which is recommended for its Omega-3 fatty acids.

Other factors that contribute to heart disease and stroke include tobacco and alcohol use, inactivity, and excess body weight.

To add to our health woes today, 2006 research indicated that Alzheimer's Disease has risk factors similar to those of cardiovascular disease. In this research, as reported in *Lancet*, the best predictors of loss of mental function are high blood pressure, obesity, high cholesterol, and inactivity—the same predictors we see in cardiovascular disease.

Make the health of your body and mind a priority for 2009:

- Eat a diet high in fiber and nutrients. Focus on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, low-fat dairy, and fish. Limit the amount of saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, sodium, and refined carbohydrates.
- Get some physical activity every day. Go to www.MyPyramid.gov to find recommendations.
- Strive for a healthy body weight.
- Eliminate tobacco.
- If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation.

If you like fries with your steak, try this healthy version that gives you 180 percent of your vitamin A for the day!

Orange Steak Fries

2 large yams (unpeeled)	1/2 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon olive/canola oil	Black pepper (optional)

Cut yams into large wedge-shaped pieces. Toss with oil, salt, and pepper. Spread on a baking sheet, and bake at 450°F until fork tender. Serves 4.

Nutrition facts per serving: 90 calories, 3.5 grams fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 200 mg sodium, 13 g carbohydrate, 1 g protein

Living Well

- Want to get more veggies in your diet? Add baby spinach to pasta sauce, or put some frozen peas in your brown rice a few minutes before it's done.
- You've heard the claims that dark chocolate can protect your heart. But chocolate has a lot of calories, so "think small" before you indulge. Eat just one or two squares of chocolate instead of the whole candy bar.
- To cut heating costs, turn down your thermostat 5 degrees and compensate with clothing. Also, maintain and clean your furnace regularly.
- Consider cancelling cable TV. You'll save money, plus you might even spend less time watching television and more time enjoying physical activity.
- Watch out for beverage bloat! Soda pop and high-calorie coffee drinks quickly show up on the waistline. Stick to water, plain coffee or tea, or other calorie-free beverages.
- Let children help plan and prepare meals. Kids are more likely to eat the foods they help prepare—a good strategy for getting them to eat veggies!
- Check out the *You and Your Family* website for all kinds of tips and information ranging from wild game cooking, to parenting suggestions, to getting stains out of clothing. You'll find it at <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/regions/SIfamily>.

Talking to Kids About Tough Times

Milly Kaiser and GiGi Grumbach, Extension educators, family life

Times are tough these days, and many families are trying to cut down on household expenses. But, how do you help your children understand the sacrifices each family member must make?

How many times have you said, “When you leave a room, turn the light off” or “Haven’t you been in the shower long enough?”

It takes time for children to understand the connection between their utility use and cost savings or even the impact it has on the environment. Continued conversations are necessary, but how do we do this without stressing everyone out?

Here are some tips for talking with your child about these economically stressful times:

- Have the conversation. Talk with your children about what they see in the news with regard to the economy. Ask what they think the family can do about it. Ask them how they believe this affects them, their friends, and your family. Then, explain how your family is being affected by the economy.
- After this initial conversation, talk with them again. After a few days or a week, check back with your children to make sure your message was understood. The time between these two conversations may depend on the children’s ages.

- Spare them the worry. Although parents are encouraged to talk with their children about the family’s budget, don’t overwhelm them with grim details. Children need a sense of security and stability. Continue with family rituals and routines that don’t break the family bank.
- Make cost-savings fun, when possible. Encourage your kids to come up with cost-cutting things the family can do to save money. Perhaps, the person in the house who takes the shortest time in the shower wins an award for the week. This “contest” can do two things:
 1. make them aware of the time they spend using water; and
 2. help them see (at the end of the month) how much money the family saves when everyone cuts back on water usage. For more tips on cutting household costs, see our *Spend Smart/Save Smart Tips* at http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/toughtimes/smart_tips.cfm
- Give them a task. If your kids always ask for pricey items in the grocery store, give them a “shopping on a budget” task. Give them an allotted amount of money, a list of items they must buy, and a calculator in hand. They will have to figure out how to price items and get the best value. You may need to model for them how to find the best value.

- Be a good financial role model. Children learn values through both verbal messages and by the examples adults/parents set. Will they inherit a value base of consumption or reserve?



The value of spending today versus saving for tomorrow has become our cultural norm. Many individuals look for immediate gratification that leads to “broken diets, delayed exercise plans, unfulfilled savings plans, and unanticipated debt” (Anderson & Nevitte, 2006). How then do parents balance the need to fulfill today’s desires with the need to teach and model financial moderation to their children?

One way to begin is by having critical conversations with the children, especially now, about our current economic crisis. In addition to these conversations, be mindful of the unspoken messages you send to your children. For some people, it helps to talk about things during stressful times—it decreases the uncertainty and helps people begin to plan.

Remember, provide a good balance between the value of spending and the value of saving for tomorrow; demonstrate your economic/money values to your children through your actions; and, send a message of hope in the face of economic uncertainty.

Get in the Motion Notion

Annette Campbell, Extension educator, communications

We do a lot of sitting, whether it's in an office chair, on bleachers at a sporting event, in front of the TV or computer, or driving the car. All that sitting can lead to weight gain and poor health.

Even those who go to the gym or take a walk every day need to think about the remaining hours in the day that are spent sitting.

Hence, the "notion of motion" as described by James Levine, a professor of medicine at the Mayo Clinic. In an interview for the *Nutrition Action Health Letter*TM, Levine says that regular exercise is unquestionably good. But for many of us, it's not enough.

We need to change our chair-based environment and get our bodies moving throughout the day. Here are some ways to get off your seat and on your feet:

- Stand up while you talk on the phone. If you have a cordless phone, walk while you talk.
 - At work, walk down the hall to respond to a staff member's instant message or email.
 - Make your lunch break active if your job is chair-based. Walk the halls, walk up and down the stairs, or go outside for a walk.
 - When running errands, get out of your car and walk into the store or bank rather than using the drive-thru service.
- Instead of spending the entire evening watching TV, go for a bike ride or do some chores around the house until it's time for your favorite program.
 - When you watch TV, get up and move during the commercials. Better yet, walk on a treadmill, pedal a stationary bike, or lift some light dumbbells while you enjoy your show.



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University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

If you need dietary or disability accommodations to participate in any events listed in this newsletter, please contact your local U of I Extension office.