

GROCERY SHOPPING SMARTS



Make going to the grocery store a well-planned event. Keep a shopping list going in your kitchen. Add to it as you run out of a staple or get ready to prepare a recipe. To save money, keep the following things in mind...

- ' **Plan before you shop.** This includes planning menus, checking store ads, making a list and collecting coupons.
- ' **Shop on a full stomach.** Don't go to the store when you are hungry. You will often buy more food than you really need. You might buy whatever you are hungry for and not what's on your list.
- ' **Shop with a list.** This will help remind you of what you have in the cupboards and refrigerator at home so you won't buy something you already have. A list also helps to plan meals so that leftovers can be used and nutrition balanced.
- ' **Be sure to use coupons wisely.** Coupons may not always save money, especially if you use them to purchase food you don't normally buy. Many times store brand or generic products are less expensive.
- ' **Compare prices.** Don't grab the first food box or item that you see. Look at the "unit" price display on the shelf and compare. When buying produce that is pre-packaged be sure to look for signs of spoilage.
- ' **Purchasing convenience items carefully.** These can be great for a busy family but they can also be high in calories and cost much more than making it yourself. Weigh your decision – are there better ways to save money and eat healthier?
- ' **Do most of your shopping only once a week.** If possible, try to buy most of your groceries at one time. You will save time and not spend as much money on "extras" you see as you shop.
- ' **Shop by yourself.** If possible, don't take your children or friends with you.
- ' **Compare forms of food.** Buy a lower-cost form of the product if it will do as well. For example: canned tomato pieces are usually cheaper than whole tomatoes and can be used for stews and sauces. Day-old bread is as good as regular, if it is to be eaten soon. Nonfat dry milk can be used for cooking and drinking. White eggs and brown eggs taste the same and are equally good for you. Compare frozen, fresh, and canned products.

Sources: Jane Scherer, Subject Matter Coordinator, Sally Wood, Extension Assistant, and Dorothy Goss, Family Economics Specialist, University of Illinois. Ann Fremion, Extension Agent, Family & Consumer Sciences, Ohio State University Extension, Chris Taylor, former Extension Agent