

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Spend less and make your dollar go further with advice from WVU Extension food and nutrition experts**

The cost of groceries and food can put serious strain on a household's finances, and even more stress on family members. One way families can cut spending is by making smart food shopping choices.

The best way to start is by finding recipes that take your food budget into consideration. There are many websites that offer healthy, delicious recipes that are free and use cost-effective ingredients.

The United States Department of Agriculture's recipe finder website offers ways to make everything from appetizers to desserts. The recipes come with nutrition information with many costing less than \$1 per serving.

Visit <http://1.usa.gov/8QJHtH> and start making delicious health-conscious food for your family mealtimes.

Making smart choices at the supermarket also helps families save considerable amounts of money every year.

It's important to choose what time of year to purchase specific vegetables and fruit. West Virginia University Extension Service's Families and Health Director Cindy Fitch, Ph.D., advises people to carefully select produce that is in season to avoid higher cost purchases.

"If you're cooking meals from scratch and shopping smart by purchasing fresh produce that is in season—to get the best prices—saving money can be easy," Fitch says. "Sometimes buying frozen or canned vegetables or fruit instead of fresh is less expensive."

Looking through the newspaper and online at manufacturer and grocery store websites can also help you save. Many stores offer coupons through the web, advertise sales or include coupons in local newspapers. Take advantage of these deals and you'll notice increased savings over time.

Before going to the grocery store, it is important to make a list of groceries that you need. Many people spend too much money at the supermarket simply because they don't plan in advance. Stick to the list to avoid unnecessary purchases.

Another way to save money is by using proper methods of food safety and preservation that prevent illness and eliminate waste. By storing ripe fruit and fresh cut vegetables in the refrigerator, using leftovers within three days and using older cans of food first, you can prevent food from being wasted.

Learn more about proper food storage and safety at fh.ext.wvu.edu/food_safety.

Finch also recommends cooking in large quantities to help save on food costs.

“Cooking extra food and freezing it is a convenient, quick way to enjoy it as lunch or dinner later on,” she says.

Using leftover foods in different soups or casseroles and freezing leftovers for later use are also ways to keep food safe and save money.

Fitch reminds families that by taking small steps such as making a grocery list, researching purchases before going to the store or simply clipping online or print coupons, you can save money on groceries every month of the year.

For more suggestions about nutrition and food budgets, contact your local WVU Extension Service county office or visit www.ext.wvu.edu.

WVU Extension Service’s Love Your Heart Movement is adapted from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute’s campaign and is targeted to help West Virginians become educated and enabled to take charge of their own health.

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