

# Healthy Eating on a Budget

Healthy eating is important for everyone. Healthy foods give you energy and may prevent obesity and many illnesses. The tips below can help you make healthy meals without spending too much money.



## Are You Busy?

---

- **Plan out a week's worth of meals.** Check to see what you already have at home first. Then look at what is on sale at the grocery that week. Make a grocery list based on what you need for these meals. If you plan ahead like this, you can also cut down on the number of times you need to visit the store.
- **Make meals ahead of time.** It can be hard to find time to cook when you are juggling a busy schedule. On days when you do have a little extra time, make a big batch of soup or casserole and freeze servings to eat later. When you are really busy, you can get a meal on the table quickly.

## Do You Need to Save Money at the Grocery?

---

- **Compare unit prices to get the best deal.** Unit prices are on the shelf price label. These let you compare prices based on weight or quantity. A big package may cost more, but you can usually get more for your money. Stock up on canned foods, rice, and dried beans when you find a good price.
- **Try cooking with different proteins.** Meat can be an expensive part of a meal. Find recipes that use little or no meat. Beans are cheap, and have fiber and protein. Eggs and dairy products are other low-cost protein options.

## Do You Want Your Family to Eat Healthier?

---

- **Use herbs and spices to give your meals a flavor boost.** Most people eat too much salt. This puts you at risk for high blood pressure and kidney disease. If you cook with herbs and spices, you can add flavor without using the salt shaker. Spices can be expensive, but a little bit goes a long way. Try to find a few that work in a lot of dishes like oregano, thyme, or cinnamon.
- **Buy canned and frozen fruits and vegetables.** Fresh produce isn't your only healthy option. Canned and frozen fruit and vegetables will last longer, and can be just as healthy. Stock up when you find a good price. Look for no salt or no sugar-added cans.

## Make Your Own Healthy Recipes

---

- Think of easy ways you can make your favorite recipes healthier by adding extra vegetables, using brown rice instead of white rice, switching to whole grain pasta, and using lower fat dairy products.
- Once you've found a few healthy "go-to" meals that you like, try changing some of the ingredients to keep things interesting. You can make this broccoli and pasta dish one night, and then try it again another night using whole grain pasta and zucchini or frozen spinach.

## Italian Broccoli and Pasta Recipe

---

### Ingredients:

2 cups fettuccini noodles, uncooked  
3 tablespoons chopped green onion (also called scallions)  
2 cups broccoli florets  
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme  
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano  
1/2 teaspoon black pepper  
1 can (14.5 ounce) stewed tomatoes  
2 teaspoons grated Parmesan cheese



### Instructions:

1. Cook noodles according to package instructions (do not include oil or salt), and drain.
2. Spray a medium skillet with nonstick cooking spray; stir-fry onion and broccoli for 3 minutes over medium heat.
3. Add seasonings (but not the Parmesan cheese) and tomatoes; simmer until heated through.
4. Spoon vegetable mixture over noodles and top with Parmesan cheese.

Time: Preparation time - 10 minutes. Cooking time - 15 minutes.

Serving Size: 1 ¼ cups

Yield: 4 servings

Cost per Recipe: \$ 3.53

Cost per Serving: \$ 0.88

Source: SNAP Ed Connection Recipe Finder

## More Healthy Recipe Ideas

---

Visit your library for healthy recipe ideas. You can find cookbooks for just about every topic - like budget-friendly meals, cooking with kids, and recipes for diabetics. You can copy down your favorite meal ideas to build your own collection of tasty, healthy recipes!

Also, check out these web sites for more ideas:

**SNAP Ed Connection Recipe Finder**

<http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov/index.php>

**CDC Fruit and Vegetable Recipe Finder**

<http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/dnparecipe/recipesearch.aspx>