Best Food Forward: Plan Shop Cook Enjoy!

Healthy eating starts at the supermarket. A grocery shopping strategy can save you time and money. It can also make healthy eating a little easier. Once you've got your plan, stick to it and enjoy!

Plan. Before you head to the store, think about what meals you'll be making, scan flyers for specials, check your kitchen's inventory and make a grocery list.

Shop. Read food labels and compare products to choose nutrient-rich foods in every aisle of the store. Fill your cart with vegetables, fruit, whole grains, milk products, lean fresh meat and meat alternatives such as legumes. Skip processed foods that are filled with fat, sugar or salt and low in nutrients.

Cook. Prepare more meals from scratch with good-for-you ingredients. Healthy eating doesn't have to be complicated; nutritious convenience foods, such as frozen fruit, ready-to-go salads and pre-chopped vegetables, offer simple shortcuts.

Cook 'n' share! Make big batches of healthy meals and swap with friends.

Make a large batch of a healthy, easy-to-share meal, such as vegetable lasagna, hearty chili or lentil soup. Split it into portions and share it with a friend or two. They do the same and share with you. You'll get different healthy meals to enjoy during the week but without shopping for ingredients or cooking.

Don't forget about breakfast! You make whole grain pancakes, your friend makes French toast, and then you swap. Refrigerate or freeze the food, and then just pop a piece into the toaster for breakfast. You'll have a quick and healthy breakfast ready to go every day of the week!

For delicious, dietitian-approved recipes, visit *www.dietitians.ca*

Grocery shopping for one or two? A smart strategy will help you save money.

Get the most out of your food budget and reduce food waste with these tips:

- **Plan wisely.** Start with a meal plan so you know ahead of time what you'll be eating. Make your grocery list and stick to it.
- **Cook from scratch.** Some ready-to-go packaged meals contain more than one serving, so you might end up paying for more than you actually eat.
- **Shop in the bulk section.** You'll save money by buying only what you need.
- **Shop as a team.** Grocery shop with a friend so you can split large packages and take advantage of volume discounts such as "buy one, get one free."
- **Buy only what you need.** Break up a bunch of bananas, buy half a dozen eggs and ask the butcher to split packages of meat. If you do buy bigger packages of meat, divide and freeze in single portions.
- **Be careful with coupons.** It's only a deal if you actually need what you buy.

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For more information about Nutrition Month, visit www.dietitians.ca.
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