

## Stretch the Family Food Dollar

Feeding your family is a large part of the family budget. What are ways we can cut corners and trim the costs? Careful planning is the key to stretching the dollar. There are steps you can take before you shop, when you shop, and after you shop that will help to trim the grocery bill. Check out these tips to help stretch your food dollar farther than before.

### Before you shop:

- ◆ Develop a food budget for your family. Write down what amount you have to spend on food, and keep track of what you actually spend each week.
- ◆ Plan meals for the week rather than asking yourself at 5 o'clock, "What shall we have for dinner tonight?" Try simple one-dish meals.
- ◆ Check to see what foods you have on hand.
- ◆ Read the ads and check for sales.
- ◆ Make a shopping list. This is key!
- ◆ Never shop when you are hungry.



Develop a food budget!

- ◆ If you have several errands, plan to make the food shopping your last stop.

### When you shop:

- ◆ Compare prices – brand names vs. generic?
- ◆ Check the "Unit Price"
- ◆ Read nutrition labels, and check ingredients too.
- ◆ Buy non-perishable foods first. Shop for frozen and refrigerated items last.
- ◆ Buy fresh fruits and vegetables in season.

They taste better and the price is cheaper.

- ◆ Stick to your list and choose what's on the list.
- ◆ Use coupons on items you ordinarily buy.
- ◆ Place meat, poultry, and seafood in plastic bags and separate from other foods in your cart.
- ◆ Do not purchase food in dented cans.
- ◆ Do not buy food past "Sell-By," "Use-By," or other expiration dates.

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## Building Blocks to Good Health

- ☺ Wash children's hands and toys regularly with soap and warm water.
- ☺ Set a good example. Your child watches what you eat.
- ☺ Sing with your children. Add a little movement and have some fun!
- ☺ Drink plenty of water.
- ☺ Create a schedule for daily meals and snacks, so the child doesn't graze all day long.
- ☺ Read aloud to your child everyday.
- ☺ Give your child time and reassurances with new food.



## Parent Question Box



Q. How can I get my child to eat vegetables?

A. Set a good example. Don't expect your child to eat green beans, if you won't. Provide variety, and allow him/her to choose. Try a **Never Empty Veggie Bowl**—Cut up carrots, celery, sugar snap peas, broccoli, radishes, and cauliflower, add grape tomatoes and place in large bowl or plastic bag in the refrigerator. Serve with small amount of low-fat Ranch dressing (optional). Count it as their vegetable servings for the day.



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## After you shop:

- ◆ Return home directly and put food away promptly. Do not make additional stops or run errands on the way home.
  - ◆ Always refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours (1 hour when the temperature is above 90 °F).
  - ◆ Separate meat, poultry, and seafood from other foods in your refrigerator.
  - ◆ Store canned goods in a cool, clean, dry place. Avoid extreme temperatures.
  - ◆ Use canned goods within one year; use canned fruit juices within 9 months. Rotate canned foods so that the oldest is used first.
- Start today by making your plan. Be prepared. Begin with

menu plans, check to see what you have on hand, and make your shopping list. Bring these suggestions along on your shopping trip to help guide you. Make small steps that you can stick to. Make two changes the next time you shop, and then make two more the next time, and so on.



## April is the Month of the Young Child!

Children's early years are critical learning years. This month we celebrate all children, and also honor their parents, teachers, and other adults who help make the most of children's early years. Make extra time to be with your child. Say 'yes' and 'I love you' as much as you say 'no' and 'don't.'



## Family Physical Activity Corner

- ☆ Take a walk in the zoo. The animals are lively again.
- ☆ Go to the park and play tag. **Got You!** Words kids love to say!
- ☆ Decorate an outside tree or bush for the nesting birds. Hang colored string on the bush/tree for birds to use for their nests. All the other birds will be jealous of their colorful nests!



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## Creation Station

### One Pan Spaghetti

*Adapted from K-State Research and Extension,  
Family Nutrition Program, Kids a Cookin'*

- 1 can (15 oz.) carrots
  - 1 can (26 oz.) spaghetti sauce
  - 2 carrot cans of water (4 cups)
  - 1 package (10 oz.) spaghetti or macaroni
- Directions: Remember to wash your hands!**
1. Wash can lids before opening to remove dirt and germs.
  2. Place carrots and their liquid in a mixing bowl. Use a potato masher or fork to mash carrots with liquid until smooth. Pour into large sauce pot.
  3. Add spaghetti sauce and water. Bring to a boil.
  4. Break spaghetti pieces into thirds. Add to the pot.
  5. Simmer until spaghetti is tender, stirring often.
  6. Serve in bowls.
- Serves: 10, 1 cup each  
This recipe provides lots of Vitamin A and Vitamin C.  
*Do you know why?*