



HEALTHY EATING ON A BUDGET

menus and notes



Introduction

The aim of this information is to help you to make healthy and inexpensive choices through menu planning for your family and their packed lunch boxes.

When you prepare food at home, you take control of what your family eats. Many takeaway foods are high in fat and salt, and because of this, should be considered as 'treat foods' eaten occasionally. Our health depends on what we usually eat — our eating habits. 'Treats' we eat (or drink) only occasionally will not be a big problem to nutrition, unless we have them more than occasionally. Cola drinks are very high in sugar and phosphates, and as such are bad for our teeth and waistlines, when drunk regularly. Cola or soft/fizzy drinks should not be the main drink for children.

People need three meals a day and some need snacks as well. Growing children, older people, pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and sports people will have additional needs for between meal snacks. Young children have small stomachs and need to eat often. Older people tend to eat little amounts and often so three small meals and three between meal snacks may suit them better.

Where do we start?

Let's look at the food groups and find ways to make healthy choices, but keep costs down.

Breads and cereals — most of us need **six or more** servings per day – to provide energy, fibre and B vitamins.

Vegetables and fruit — "Eat a rainbow" — choose **5+ different coloured** servings per day (a serving is what will fit in the palm of your hand). These provide vitamin C, natural sugars (carbohydrates for energy), and anti-oxidants. Choose fresh, frozen, canned or dried.

Milk and milk products — are a good source of protein and calcium — for healthy bones and teeth. These foods have had a lot of 'bad press' recently, because of their cost. Try to have **two to three** servings per day.

Meat and meat alternatives are also a very good source of protein, nutrients such as iron and zinc and vitamins. Included in this food group are meat, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts and seeds and dried beans. Sausages can be a good source of protein, but they also contain a lot of fat and salt, so they should not be eaten too often. Mince is cheap; however cheap cuts are high in fat, so it is a good idea to cook mince the day before you use it. Chill it, and remove the layer of fat before adding the mince to your cooking. Most people should have **one to two small** servings from this group every day. However, this does not mean having meat, fish or poultry every day. Make use of the cheaper proteins like beans and lentils. You can use them on their own, or to extend the more expensive meats in casseroles or stews.

Planning your meals

Planning meals ahead of time saves money and energy, and helps ensure that you have a balanced diet.

Meal plans

Have a plan for your family meals, e.g.

- Breakfast: _____
- Lunch: _____
- School Lunch: _____
- Dinner: _____
- Between meal snacks: _____

Suggestions for Basic Pantry Supplies

Staples:

- Flour — white and wholemeal
- Sugar — white and brown
- Salt — iodised
- Cornflour
- Custard powder
- Rice – white and brown
- Spaghetti, macaroni, lasagne sheets, noodles, spirals, cannelloni
- Couscous
- Baking bran
- Baking powder
- Cream of tartar
- Golden syrup
- Icing sugar
- Rolled oats
- Breadcrumbs
- Honey
- Marmite
- Oil – Rice bran
- Coconut

Herbs and Spices

Include a variety of different to enhance your cooking!

For example:

- Curry powder
- Caraway seeds
- Mixed herbs
- Thyme
- Oregano
- Tarragon
- Paprika
- Turmeric
- Chilli — powder, flakes or whole
- Garlic powder or granules
- Pepper — ground or corns
- Coriander — seeds and leaves
- Ginger
- Mixed Spice
- Cinnamon
- Bayleaves
- Vanilla essence

Canned, dried and Convenience foods

- Prunes
- Dried apricots
- Sultanas/raisins
- Peanuts
- Lentils
- Canned tomatoes
- Canned creamed corn
- Canned beetroot
- Canned fruit
- Spaghetti
- Baked beans
- Chickpeas
- Kidney beans
- Canned fish fillets
- Tuna/salmon/sardines
- Canned soups/cup of soup sachets
- Rice risotto

Stocks and Sauces

- Chicken stock powder
- Beef stock powder
- Vegetable stock powder
- Green herb stock powder
- Tomato paste
- Tomato sauce
- Mint sauce
- Chutneys
- Vinegar

Drinks

- Tea
- Coffee
- Milo
- Fruit drink (with vitamin C)

Cleaning gear and paperware

Special items for this week's meals

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Menu Plan for one week

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner*	Dessert/ snacks
Monday	Cereal and milk Toast and spreads Beverage	Poached eggs on toast with tomatoes in season	Bean and sausage casserole Brown rice Salad or 2 seasonal vegetables	Seasonal fresh fruit
Tuesday	Muesli and yoghurt Toast and spreads Beverage	Cheese toasties or cheese roll-ups	Apricot chicken drumsticks Mashed potatoes 2 Seasonal vegetables	Seasonal fresh fruit
Wednesday	Cereal and milk Toast and spreads Beverage	Homemade soup and toast or bread roll	Paella (one pot dinner)	Fruit crumble and custard
Thursday	Fresh/canned fruit and yoghurt Toast and spreads Beverage	Pasta and sauce	Meat loaf Jacket potatoes 2 Seasonal vegetables	Bran muffins
Friday	Glass of milk or smoothie Toast and spreads Beverage	Meat loaf and salad (leftover from last night)	Homemade battered/ Crumbed fish and oven wedges Tartare sauce or lemon wedge	Ice cream and fruit
Saturday	Cooked breakfast: e.g. French toast, pancakes, scrambled eggs	Nachos	Roast chicken Gravy/sauce Roast vegetables Green vegetable	Fresh seasonal fruit
Sunday	Crumpets and honey Warm or cold Milo	Open pie (leftover chicken)	Lasagne and salad	Ambrosia
Notes:	▶ Don't go without breakfast, especially if working or going to school	▶ Keep lunch simple — use leftovers. Include fruit	▶ Include a variety — vegetarian, fish, chicken, red meat/ mince through the week	▶ Home baking is cheaper than bought. Include as much fruit as possible

*see Supergrans recipe booklet for dinner main dishes.

Shopping list:

School Lunch Menu for one week

	Main item	Sweet treat	Fruit/vegetable	Snack (Morning break)
Monday	Leftovers (open pie)	Yoghurt or dairy dessert	Seasonal fresh fruit	Cereal/muesli/nut bar or Weetbix square
Tuesday	Scotch egg	Homemade baked product	Salad veges — tomato, cucumber, celery/carrot sticks, lettuce	Cheese toasties
Wednesday	Chicken drumstick	Bran muffin	Seasonal fresh fruit	Flavoured milk
Thursday	Filled wholemeal/white bread roll with hummus and salad filling	Tetrapak of fruit juice	Seasonal fresh fruit	Scroggin — raisins, nuts and/or dried fruit
Friday	Meat loaf and salad vegetables	Sandwich with Nutella, peanut butter or honey	Salad vegetables	Cheese and crackers
Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use leftovers from previous night if available. ▶ Hot foods could be sent in a thermos flask, or a microwaveable container for workplace lunches. ▶ Always include a bottle of water 			

Portion sizes of lunch items depend on the needs of the individual.

Shopping for nutrition

- **Always** shop with a list, and when you are not hungry — this helps curb impulse buying.
- Buy fruit and vegetables when they are in season, preferably locally produced. Select your own produce, rather than that already bagged up.
- Buy only the amount you need. We tend to eat too much meat, and if you allow 125 to 130g per person, this will produce 100g cooked. Adolescents will need more than this — but no more than 180g raw. If this is not enough, make the meat go further with plenty of seasonal vegetables, or plant proteins such as beans, chickpeas, lentils.
- The 'old-fashioned' foods are often the healthiest — Weet-bix and Weeties are cheap but excellent cereals. They are low in fat and sugar, and high in fibre.
- If possible, buy from bulk bins, use coupon specials, store home brands, and plain packaging, if these are items on your list. Don't buy things you don't use.
- Look at bottom shelves for cheaper items.
- Focus your purchasing around the outside aisles — vegetables and fruit, meat, bread, and dairy products. Avoid the convenience food aisles if you are shopping to a budget.

Cheaper choices to look for in the various food categories

Breads, Cereals & Biscuits

- Regular white bread — toast and sandwich sliced
- Regular wholemeal bread — toast and sandwich sliced
- Rolled oats
- Weet-bix, Weeties, cornflakes, rice bubbles
- Plain busciuts — wine, arrowroot, malt
- Gingernuts
- Chocolate chip biscuits
- Digestives
- Bagged biscuits

Milk & Milk Products

- Fresh milk — standard, lite, trim
- UHT milk — calcium enriched
- Dried milk powder
- Cheese — cheddar: tasty, mild, edam, Colby
- Pizza cheese
- Bulk ice cream
- Homemade yoghurt (e.g. Easi-yo)

Vegetables & Fruit — buy in season

- Potatoes
- Pumpkin
- Onions
- Kumara
- Celery
- Lettuce
- Carrots
- Cabbage
- Silverbeet
- Cauliflower
- Fresh tomatoes
- Canned corn
- Canned tomatoes
- Frozen vegetables: peas, corn, mixed veges, green beans
- Bananas
- Apples
- Oranges

Pre-prepared Foods

- Regular pasta sauce
- Dried packet sauces
- Dried soup
- Canned: baked beans, chilli beans, spaghetti

Meat, Chicken & Fish

- Minced lamb, pork, beef
- Corned silverside
- Mutton chops
- Pork chops
- Fresh chicken thighs/legs
- Fresh whole chicken
- Frozen chicken pieces, whole chicken
- Chipolatas
- Pork flavoured sausages
- Saveloys
- Sausage meat
- Luncheon meat
- Whole fish: terakihi, flounder, monkfish, sole, gurnard
- Live mussels
- Live surf clams (pipi)
- Canned fish: mackerel, smoked fillets, sardines, tuna

This list has been adapted from The University of Otago Food Costs Survey data, 2011.

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