

Good for Your Body and Your Budget

By Paul DeMiglio | July 9, 2013

Does stocking your shelves with nutritious foods always mean breaking your budget at the grocery store or local market? You probably think the answer is yes, but what we found might shock you.

Dawn Undurraga, a consulting nutritionist for the Environmental Working Group (EWG) and registered dietitian, tells a different story: Purchasing healthy foods and saving money can go hand in hand.

"Maintaining a delicious diet that's good for you and the planet doesn't have to be expensive," she says. "You can eat 5-9 servings of fruits and vegetables for less than the cost of a bus ride, for example. But people need the tools to help make this happen."

And that's exactly what the EWG ["Good Food on a Tight Budget"](#) free shopping guide provides, to help people eat cheap, clean, green and healthy.

"We focused on the things that you can do and the changes you can make to save money," Undurraga says, based on [recent data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) as well as feedback from groups that have on-the-ground expertise empowering consumers to navigate through the issues surrounding tight budgets, like [Feeding America](#) and [Share Our Strength](#).

This guide includes lists that open the door to purchasing foods with the most nutritional value for the lowest price, including [15 practical recipes](#) that on average cost less than \$1.

Tips enable shoppers to spend their dollars smartly, specifying which items are best to purchase frozen (like corn) or fresh (like lima beans), as well as how to prepare dishes at home and how to make your foods last longer.

One key recommendation for saving money on a nutritious eating regimen is to plan meals ahead, budget your time while shopping and to know what you want at the store beforehand.

"When you do, you'll find you waste less food. Not wasting food by having a good plan can save you money too. When you shop with a meal list and a timeline,

you can get in and out of a store quickly," without going outside your budget by getting distracted and purchasing less healthy foods you don't want or need, Undurraga explains.

The EWG created "Good Food on a Tight Budget" based on [specific measures](#) to establish the amount of pesticides that the foods contain, also comparing and rating the foods to organize the guide on a balance of 5 factors:

- Beneficial nutrients
- Nutrients to minimize (i.e. sodium)
- Price
- Extent of processing
- Harmful contaminants from environmental pollution and food packaging

The [USDA also underscores](#) that planning your meals for the week and doing an inventory of foods you already have before making a list are essential. They also encourage buying non-perishables in bulk during sales and to purchase foods in season to get the lowest prices while optimizing freshness.

Similar strategies for making healthy shopping choices on a budget can also be found [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

All the research, planning and preparation involved in being a selective shopper might seem daunting at first, but the payoff to your health and budget is worth the investment.

"There's so many ways to put together a diet. The shoppers who often make the most of their budget are those already on a tight budget. It's tough but possible," when you incorporate approaches that work best for you, Undurraga says.

Have you used any of these tips when grocery shopping? Did they help make it easier to purchase healthy foods and stay within your financial means? Tell us why or why not.

To read this post on RWHC Blog, [click here](#).