

## Wellness Articles

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An archive of past wellness articles is available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/9966.asp>

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## Eat healthy for less

Healthy eating does not have to be costly. The following tips will help you plan your grocery list, compare products, and choose foods so that you get the most nutrition for your money.

### Vegetables and fruits

If you have a freezer, buy frozen vegetables and fruits. They're as nutritious as fresh, and they will last longer in the freezer, too. You can also find out-of-season fruits and vegetables in the freezer section.

Choose plain frozen vegetables. The vegetables sold with added sauces may be higher in fat, sugar, and salt.

Look for canned vegetables labelled "no added salt" or "low sodium (salt)." Rinse canned vegetables in water before eating to lower the salt even more.

### Grains

Compare prices to see if you can buy whole wheat or whole grain breads, crackers, and pasta at the same or a lower price than refined (white) products. Whole grains provide more nutrients and are healthier choices.

If you have freezer space, buy whole grain bread on sale and freeze it. Buy dry pasta and grains on sale to save money while taking advantage of their long shelf life.

Packaged seasoned rice and pasta side dishes often contain more sodium. These often cost more than plain rice and pasta. Add your own low-sodium spices and flavouring for healthier, lower cost dishes.

### **Proteins**

Larger containers of milk may cost less and can be a good choice if you're able to use it before the best-before date. If you use fortified soy beverage or another milk substitute, compare the price of fresh to shelf-stable brands.

When shopping for cheese, look for lower fat (20 per cent M.F. or less) on the label. Compare prices between lower fat cheese and regular cheese, they often cost the same. Choose lower fat, when possible.

Dried beans, lentils, and split peas are less expensive than canned beans. They are also a lower cost option for protein than meat. Plan ahead to soak and cook dried beans so they're ready when you are.

If choosing canned beans and lentils, look for brands with no salt added. Rinse canned beans and lentils under water to remove some of the sodium (salt) and some of the gas-causing compounds.

Eggs are usually less expensive than other protein foods such as meat. Before buying, choose a carton that doesn't have any broken shells.

Frozen fish can be less expensive than fresh. Plain fish fillets are usually a healthier choice as they are lower in fat and sodium than battered, breaded, or seasoned fish.

For more information: Visit [ahs.ca/nutritionresources](https://www.ahs.ca/nutritionresources) and search for: Choose and Prepare Healthy Food, Weekly Menu Planner, Healthy Grocery List, Meal Planning, and Reading Labels.