

SHOP SMART, STORE SAFE

Introduction

This lesson gives an older adult audience an opportunity to focus on making the most of their food budgets by sharing strategies for healthy shopping on a budget and discussing food storage and safety.

Preparation

1. Review the topic.

- Start with the key concepts and discussion guide. The discussion guide provides suggested questions to draw out participants' existing knowledge as well as information you can offer in response to each question.
- Consider your participant demographics and potential interests, and conduct any additional research that may be necessary to prepare for specific questions or improve your own understanding of key concepts (see “Program Guide” for suggested resources).

2. Plan your lesson structure.

- Determine whether time and resources allow for a food-based activity or whether you will use an alternate activity. This lesson includes one alternate activity, and additional activity suggestions are available in the “Program Guide.”
- See “Exercise for Health” lesson for ways to incorporate physical activity into the lesson, and plan to ask participants to share their favorite ways to exercise.
- Prepare a rough timeline of your lesson and a plan to integrate discussion with the activity. Depending on available time and participant interests, you can integrate discussion topics into an activity or use discussion time to open or close the lesson.

3. Plan how to administer pre-test (as well as post-test if this is the final session). See “Program Guide” for details.

4. Prepare materials.

- Review the appropriate activity and prepare any necessary materials.
- Choose and print handouts, recipes and pre-tests.

Suggested Recipes

Recipe should use affordable foods like beans, greens, carrots and potatoes.

- Sweet Potato Black Bean Chili
- Banana Wrap

Suggested Handouts

- “Smart Shopping With Unit Prices”
- “Stock Your Pantry and Kitchen”
- “Help with Food Costs”

Key Concepts

Shopping, storage and safety—these three concepts can help seniors make the most of their food budgets. Share strategies for finding healthy, economical options throughout the year, tips for storing food to avoid spoilage, and important reminders about food safety.

Discussion Guide

What are some smart shopping strategies for saving money and time?

- Decide how much you can spend for the week, use grocery circulars or estimate prices for foods you commonly buy, check your pantry for food you already have, and make a plan for your meals and snacks for the week. Use your meal plan to make a shopping list, take your list to the grocery store and only purchase what is on your list.
- Save time and money by planning some meals that you can make in large batches and eat throughout the week, or make extra components to use in different ways (for example, beans you use for beans and rice one night could go in bean soup another day).
- Consider using a loyalty card at your favorite store to save money on sale items. Try asking for senior discounts as well as using coupons. (Try using coupons to plan your grocery list.)
- Save money by purchasing store brands; they often have the exact same ingredients as fancy labels.
- Learn to compare unit prices: look for the price per pound or ounce to see if a slightly more expensive item actually gives you much more for your money.

Compare:

8 OZ	SLICED TURKEY		3 LBS	FROZEN TURKEY BREAST	
\$6.95		86.9¢	\$8.99		\$2.99
		PER OUNCE			PER POUND

- Read the ingredient list to find out exactly what you're paying for. Ingredients listed first make up most of the product, so checking the order of ingredients can be helpful as well.
- Look for healthier and more affordable foods on higher and lower shelves—some brands pay to have their products placed on the middle shelves.
- Consider buying foods you know you eat a lot of in bulk, especially if they are shelf stable or can be frozen (but remember that buying too much of foods you rarely eat can lead to wasted food and money).

In your experience, what healthy foods are good deals throughout the year?

- Fresh fruits and vegetables tend to be cheapest in season, but frozen and canned produce are good options as well. Look for canned vegetables with little or no added salt.
- Beans are always an economical source of protein; try buying dried beans in larger bags or from bulk bins where you can measure out the exact amount you need.
- Potatoes, carrots and greens are affordable vegetable options, and apples and bananas can fit your fruit budget.
- Look for savings on bulk bags of produce that can be stored for a longer time, like apples, carrots, potatoes and onions.

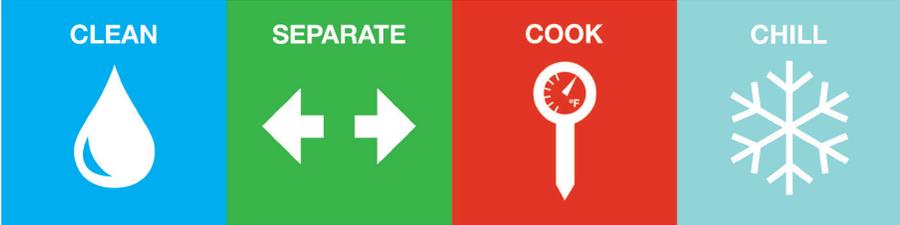


How do you store food to keep it safe and prevent spoiling?

- Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs separate from foods you won't cook. Storing these items on the bottom shelf of your fridge can keep any raw juices from getting on other foods.
- Learn which fruits and vegetables to store in the fridge and which can be kept at room temperature (store potatoes, winter squash, garlic, tomatoes and ripening fruit at room temperature, keeping onions and potatoes separate).
- Put leftovers in the fridge as soon as possible; store in shallow containers labeled with the date you prepared the food.
- Make sure your refrigerator is at 40 degrees and your freezer is at zero degrees or below.

What are some important food safety strategies for while you're cooking?

- Rinse fruits and vegetables under running water before cooking.
- Make sure your hands, counter and cutting board are clean before you begin cooking.
- Use different knives and cutting boards or clean your knives and cutting boards after preparing raw foods that could be sources of contamination.
- Make sure your food is sufficiently cooked by using a thermometer to check the temperature of meat and poultry, and by bringing soups, stews and sauces to a boil. Minimum internal temperatures for cooked food, according to the USDA:
 - Red meat (beef, pork, lamb): 145
 - Ground meat: 160
 - Poultry: 165
 - Leftovers: 165



Graphic from the USDA *Food Safe Families* campaign, <http://foodsafety.adcouncil.org/>

How do you know how long to keep different foods? How can you tell if food has gone bad?

- Eat pre-packaged and processed foods by their “use-by” date.
- The “sell by” date is just for stores to know how long they can sell different products, and “best by” dates are recommendations from manufacturers based on when they think the product will taste best. Greens that look wilted or carrots that are a little soft may not be good for salads, but you still can add them to soups or casseroles.
- Use prepared food within 3 days of storing it in the refrigerator, or freeze food you don't expect to eat that quickly. When reheating food, use a thermometer to check that the temperature is over 165 degrees; reheat soups, stews and sauces to a rolling boil.
- When in doubt, trust your senses—look at and smell food, and ask someone else to help confirm your instincts.

Suggested Activities

If you have access to basic ingredients and supplies, we recommend planning the lesson around a cooking demonstration or activity that will show participants concrete skills that apply the lesson concepts. If limited resources or time make a food-based activity impossible, use the alternate activity or any of the other suggested activities in the “Program Guide.”

A. Food-Based Activity: Pasta/Potato Salad

If you can pre-cook pasta to bring to the lesson, try demonstrate combining whole wheat pasta with a healthy protein, variety of vegetables, and dressing to make a healthy and affordable meal with mostly shelf-stable items. You can substitute potatoes (canned if pre-cooking is not an option) for pasta.

Discussion points to address while preparing food (see discussion guide as well):

- Do you like to buy whole grain pasta? Have you tried whole wheat pasta or other types like brown rice pasta? Explain how to check the ingredients list to find out whether a whole grain is listed as the first ingredient. Whole grain pasta is just as affordable as pasta made with refined grains, especially if you can find store brands.
- What are some examples of other whole grains? Suggest building hearty salads around brown rice, barley, or farro.
- What kind of beans do you like to eat? Do you usually buy dried or canned beans? If you have the option to cook dried beans they can be the most economical option, but canned beans are also very affordable.
- What are some of your favorite fresh, canned or frozen vegetables? Fresh produce is most affordable in season, but frozen and canned vegetables are just as nutritious. Remember to drain and rinse canned vegetables as well as beans to remove excess sodium.

Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixing bowl(s): one for demo, or one per group • Mixing spoon(s): one for demo, or one per group • Whisks or forks to mix dressing • Sample dishes and spoons for each participant
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start by deciding whether the activity will be a demonstration or will involve participation. If participants will be preparing food themselves, decide whether they will work alone or in groups. • Review “Program Guide” for tips on leading a cooking demo or guiding participants through a recipe. • Review ingredients and make substitutions as necessary. • Modify recipe as necessary, and print copies for participants to take home. • Cook pasta or potatoes. • Drain and rinse beans and vegetables.
Ingredients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole-wheat pasta or potatoes (could be canned) • Canned beans (try kidney, white or garbanzo) • Canned vegetables • Olive oil • Vinegar (balsamic or red wine) • Salt and pepper • Fresh or dried herbs (optional)
Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combine pasta/potatoes, beans and vegetables in a bowl and mix. • Show participants how to combine oil, vinegar and herbs to make a dressing.

B. Alternate Activity: Unit Price

Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grocery circulars or unit prices handout, optional unit prices video (see “Program Guide” for link)
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review unit prices handout and/or video, if using.
Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask if anyone checks unit prices when they shop. If so, what are some examples of what they have found out? (Why unit prices are helpful: sometimes larger sizes cost more overall but less per pound or ounce; prices vary between fresh, frozen and canned produce; generic and name brands may come in different sizes and be hard to compare without unit prices.) • Review unit price handout and/or watch video. Then give participants the opportunity to practice using second page of unit price handout or by comparing prices on grocery circulars. • This can also be an opportunity to discuss which foods tend to be cheapest per pound.

Pantry Pasta Salad

Combine whole wheat pasta with a healthy protein, variety of vegetables, and dressing to make a healthy and affordable meal with mostly shelf-stable items. You can also substitute potatoes (canned if cooking is not an option) for pasta.

INGREDIENTS

- Whole-wheat pasta OR potatoes (could be canned)
- Canned beans (try kidney, white, or garbanzo)
- Canned vegetables (tomatoes, corn, green beans, peas, asparagus)
- Olive oil
- Vinegar (balsamic or red wine)
- Salt and pepper
- Optional herbs (try oregano, basil, thyme)

DIRECTIONS

1. Cook pasta according to package directions, or boil potatoes until tender.
2. Drain and rinse beans and vegetables.
3. Use a fork to whisk together olive oil, vinegar, salt and pepper, and herbs.
4. Combine all ingredients in a bowl and mix to combine.

