Eating Well on A Tight Budget…

Buying healthy food and eating well with kidney disease can be a challenge, especially when money is limited. Here are some tips to help…

Plan Ahead

**Plan your meals for the week.** This will help you to save both time and money as it reduces extra trips to the grocery store and you can plan to use leftovers in future meals.

**Shop where the deals are!** Some stores offer 10 to 20% off your total bill just for shopping on certain days of the week!

- **To coupon or not to coupon.** Looking for food sales can be a great thing for your wallet…..if you will use the food and have room to store it.

**Pack lunches and snacks.** Try to pack lunches and healthy snack foods to take with you when you can’t eat at home.

- **Limit how often you eat at restaurants.** For celebrations or social events, cook a meal with friends and family, or hold a “pot luck” dinner.

**Have breakfast at home.** The cost of buying coffee and baked goods adds up quickly. Spending $3.50 on coffee and a muffin three times per week will cost you $546 per year!

Shop Smart

- **Make a list…and stick to it.**
- **Don’t shop tired or hungry.**
- **Shop the outside aisles of the store.**
- **Stoop and rise.** The most expensive food items tend to be at eye-level. Look to the lower and upper shelves for hidden savings.
- **Bulk up!** Buying staple foods, like pasta, rice and flour, in bulk saves packaging costs and can cost less.
- **Don’t be sold on “convenience”.** Try to limit convenience foods like frozen dinners, packaged noodle and rice mixes, and canned soups and stews - they can be more expensive and are often high in salt.

To be used in conjunction with advice from a Registered Dietitian.
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Protein: Getting Your $$$ Worth

- **Best bets.** Dark-meat chicken parts, frozen whole chickens, eggs, tuna and lean ground beef are usually cheap year-round in Canada.

- **Compare the unit price.** Less tender cuts of meat tend to be much cheaper, but are just as rich in protein as more expensive cuts. Cook them with slow, moist heat to tenderize.

- **It doesn’t have to be the best looking…** Utility grade poultry may be missing a wing or a leg but is otherwise fine….and cheaper.

- **Buy big.** Family or quantity packs of meat, poultry and fish can translate to big savings. Portion out and freeze what you can’t use, and thaw in the fridge when needed.

- **Ask about discounts.** Ask the meat manager if they sell about-to-expire cuts for half price. Freeze the meat if you won’t be able to use it by the expiration date.

- **Do it yourself.** Taking a few minutes to skin your own chicken can save you $.

In the Kitchen

- **Think slow and simmer.** Fill a crock pot or slow cooker with meat and vegetables, let it cook all day and come home to an easy and delicious supper.

- **Use your leftovers.** Cook extra meat, poultry or fish at supper time and plan to use in a sandwich, casserole or salad the next day. Leftover meat and vegetables can also be added to low-sodium broth to make delicious soup.

- **Double up:** When making dishes like lasagna, soup, or casseroles, double or triple the recipe and freeze the extra portions for future meals.

- **…or pare down-** Portion out single servings of freezer-bound dishes. They’re quicker to thaw and reheat, and handy if you’re cooking for one.

- **Get a little help from friends.** Throw a batch cooking party! Take an afternoon and get friends to each prepare multiple batches of their favourite freezer-ready foods. Split the ingredient costs and take home one of each dish for a freezer full of variety.