

# How to Eat Healthy & Save Money at the Same Time



Grocery prices have risen, which might be increasing your stress about meal planning. However, healthier eating is accessible to everyone. With just a bit of knowledge and some planning, you can achieve significant savings & make healthier choices, no matter your budget! Discover straightforward tips to help you eat well while saving money, & connect with food resources.



## Start in a happy place

Start by thinking about what foods you like. Then, envision the healthiest version of them. Are you a french-fry fiend? Cooking up potato wedges seasoned with herbs as an affordable, not-soaked-in-fat option can be a satisfying alternative. Is boxed macaroni and cheese your go-to quick meal? You can get a whole bag of pasta for much less per serving. Sprinkle olive oil, fresh herbs and spices and maybe just a sprinkling of cheese, and you've just stretched your dollar and made something that's better for you.

## Learn to cook

If you're buying food that is even partially prepared, you are likely spending a lot more money than you need to. Investing time into learning how to cook and preparing your meals can add up to a big savings. Building a new habit of cooking your meals can be a lifelong investment in your future. Learning or expanding cooking skills can also boost your confidence, self esteem, and improve your overall well-being.

## Plan on it

Planning before you grocery shop can save time in the kitchen, money at the store and reduce food waste, saving you even more money. Start by planning what feels most manageable to you and build on those skills. If the idea of planning out a whole week of meals is too much, start by planning just workdays, or just one meal a day. Take inventory of what you have on hand to make sure perishable items won't go to waste. Then make a grocery list with things to purchase. It can help keep you from being tempted by things you don't need.

For digital savvy shoppers, there are plenty of online resources to help build your shopping list.

**COMPARE PRICES, LOOK AT INGREDIENTS, CLIP COUPONS, BUILD YOUR SHOPPING LIST AND MORE:**  
[www.wegmans.com/service/mobile-app](http://www.wegmans.com/service/mobile-app)

**LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW TO PLAN YOUR MEALS AN PREPARE FOR SHOPPING:**  
[www.myplate.gov/eat-healthy/what-is-myplate](http://www.myplate.gov/eat-healthy/what-is-myplate)

## Leverage your leftovers

You can even plan to batch cook meals, meaning cooking larger amounts of food at one time. Find a meal you can make, double the size, freeze half. You've just knocked out several meals in the time it takes to make one.

Planned leftovers can stockpile your freezer with healthy, homemade meals, saving you from spending extra money on takeout on days when life gets busy.

**LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW TO BUILD HEALTHY EATING HABITS ONE MEAL AT A TIME.**  
[www.myplate.gov/](http://www.myplate.gov/)

“ You shouldn't have to cook every meal from scratch. Have leftovers from dinner? Make that your lunch for the next day and that's one less meal to cook!



## Canned and frozen can be okay

Fruits and veggies that are canned or frozen can be a healthy and budget friendly option. If canned beans make your time in the kitchen easier, have at it. Just be mindful of the ingredients by checking the label. Avoid products with added sugar or salt. Canned and frozen foods also have a longer shelf life than their fresh counterparts, making them easy pantry staples in your home that are less likely to perish before you have had a chance to eat them.

## Be store-savvy

A lot of things that look like a sale are actually advertisements. Compare the prices and ingredients with the items above and below on the store shelf.

Coupons also call for caution. They can be helpful with cost savings if they're for a product you buy regularly. However, if the coupon is for a product you wouldn't normally buy, take a pause. Ask yourself if the coupon is just acting as an advertisement to get you to buy more of something you wouldn't typically buy - especially if it would cause you to buy a bunch of something perishable.

This is another area where planning helps. Stick to your grocery list!

### FIND MORE TIPS FOR EATING HEALTHY ON A BUDGET.

[www.myplate.gov/eat-healthy/healthy-eating-budget](http://www.myplate.gov/eat-healthy/healthy-eating-budget)

## Eat local, in season produce

Seasonal eating, also known as "eating the seasons", involves eating foods that are in season for your geographic area. Eating seasonally has a variety of benefits including cost savings. When we eat out of season and outside of our local agriculture, we consume produce that arrives at grocery stores by truck, boat and/or plane from other cities, states and countries. The long journey to our grocery store shelves is factored into the price we pay for produce. Eating locally can be a more budget-friendly option, and farmers markets can offer competitive prices.

You may also have a local farm near you that offers a CSA. CSA stands for Community Supported Agriculture. Members purchase a share of the farm's harvest before the growing season begins. In return, members receive a variety of seasonal produce throughout the growing season. Although members pay a larger lump sum of money up front, the amount of fresh, in season produce they receive every week can cost much less than what they would pay for the same produce at a supermarket. Often times this partnership between farms and members can include other perks like you-pick flowers and produce in addition to the regular produce supply.

### FIND SOME CSAS IN ERIE COUNTY

[www3.erie.gov/eriegrown/community-supported-agriculture](http://www3.erie.gov/eriegrown/community-supported-agriculture)

### LEARN MORE ABOUT EATING SEASONALLY AND FIND A LOCAL FARMER'S MARKET

[ihgwny.com/blog/nutrition/article:benefits-of-eating-seasonal-find-a-farmers-market-in-western-new-york](http://ihgwny.com/blog/nutrition/article:benefits-of-eating-seasonal-find-a-farmers-market-in-western-new-york)



## Grow your own food

Gardening has variety of health and wellness benefits, and could also become a newfound hobby to improve your well-being, support your healthy eating goals, and save you money on your grocery bill! If you have the space and access to supplies, growing produce from seeds or starter plants from a local store, can provide you a bounty of in season produce that you can freeze or preserve. If you plant perennial fruits, vegetables and herbs, they should grow back every year in your garden. If you save seeds from annual fruits, veggies and herbs, you'll have seeds at no cost for the next growing season.

Short on space or gardening tools? You may also be able to find a local community garden space, which for a fee will give you access to garden space to grow your own food and connect with other community members. Many community gardens also provide the tools and equipment needed to garden for members to share. New to gardening? Start small! Try starting with some potted herbs and salad greens.



### FIND VEGETABLE GARDEN RESOURCES

[essex.cce.cornell.edu/gardening/cornell-vegetable-gardening-resources](http://essex.cce.cornell.edu/gardening/cornell-vegetable-gardening-resources)

### GET STARTED WITH FOOD GARDENING BASICS

[gardening.cals.cornell.edu/garden-guidance/foodgarden/](http://gardening.cals.cornell.edu/garden-guidance/foodgarden/)

### LEARN MORE ABOUT FOOD PRESERVATION

[erie.cce.cornell.edu/community-health-nutrition/food-preservation](http://erie.cce.cornell.edu/community-health-nutrition/food-preservation)

### LEARN MORE ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF GARDENING

[ihgwny.com/blog/medical-blog/article:health-benefits-of-gardening/](http://ihgwny.com/blog/medical-blog/article:health-benefits-of-gardening/)

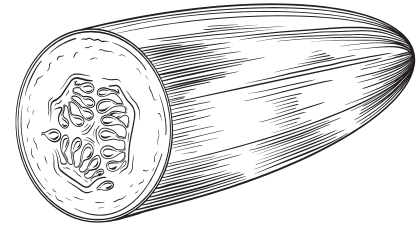
## Enjoy yourself

Food is more than just nourishment; it's about culture and memories. There's no one-plan-fits-all approach to finding balance. Shopping, meal planning, cooking and eating can be a source of pleasure that reconnects you to your culture, memories and values. If you're stuck in a food rut, try to plan your next meal by reconnecting with a fond food memory as a source of joy.

How can you recreate a classic family favorite in a healthy way with budget friendly ingredients you have access to? How can you reconnect with your culture with a simple meal? How can you get your family members or loved ones involved in meal planning and prepping as a positive memory making experience? Would putting on some music or a podcast make cooking more fun? There are plenty of ways to make the practice of meal planning and prepping more enjoyable and unique to your lifestyle and values!



# Connect with local & federal food resources:



If you're struggling to put food on the table, you're not alone. In 2023, 1 in 7 US families faced food insecurity. That percentage of US households, 13.5%, was up from 12.8% in 2022.



## Get help with SNAP

When looking for help with groceries, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a good place to start. This program helps low-income working people, seniors, the disabled and others feed their families. SNAP even allows shopping at participating farmers markets! Did you know that plants and seeds used to grow food may be eligible for purchase using SNAP benefits?

Fill out an application online to see if you qualify. Need help applying for SNAP? The Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP) offers one-on-one help applying for SNAP.

### FILL OUT A SNAP APPLICATION ONLINE

[www.ny.gov/services/apply-snap](http://www.ny.gov/services/apply-snap)

### FIND A FARMER'S MARKET THAT ACCEPTS SNAP

[snaptomarket.com](http://snaptomarket.com)

### FIND SNAP HELP FROM NOEP NEAR YOU

[hungersolutionsny.org/find-food-help/snap/](http://hungersolutionsny.org/find-food-help/snap/)

### LEARN MORE ABOUT SNAP PLANT & SEED BENEFITS

[www.snapgardens.org](http://www.snapgardens.org)



## Get help with WIC

Households with children under the age of 5 may qualify for USDA's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). WIC supports moms, moms-to-be, and primary caregivers of children under 5 with healthy food, nutrition education, breastfeeding support and referrals to other services. Chat with Wanda, WIC's 24/7 virtual assistant to see if you are eligible. In less than 3 minutes, you can see if you are eligible and get a referral to your local WIC office. All WIC appointments can be held over the phone or in person, including new enrollment. Contact your local WIC office for help enrolling, or call WIC's helpline at 716-218-1484.

### CHAT WITH WANDA, WIC'S 24/7 VIRTUAL ONLINE ASSISTANT

[www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/wic/how\\_to\\_apply.htm](http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/wic/how_to_apply.htm)

### CONTACT YOUR LOCAL WIC OFFICE

[www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/wic/local\\_agencies.htm](http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/wic/local_agencies.htm)

## Free summer meals

Kids and teens ages 18 and under can get free, healthy meals at nearby places like parks, community centers and libraries. Meals vary, but all include healthy foods like fruits, vegetables, grains and protein. Many sites offer fun activities, too. There is no need to sign up. Just show up!

### FIND MEALS NEAR YOU

- Text: "food" to 304-304
- Call: 1-866-3-HUNGRY

### FIND MEALS NEAR YOU USING THE ONLINE MAP

[hungersolutionsny.org/find-food-help/summer-meals/#map](http://hungersolutionsny.org/find-food-help/summer-meals/#map)

## Additional resources in Erie County

If food insecurity is a problem reach out to your Inspired Health Group (IHG) care team for assistance. Your care team can offer more personalized assistance, including connecting you to a Dietitian Nutritionist at IHG, contact us via your patient portal or call our office. We're here to help without judgement.

### Home Delivered Meals for 60+

If you or someone you know, is unable to take care of meal preparation, a call to (716) 858-8526 can initiate an in-home evaluation for home-delivered meals as well as any other benefits or services for which the older person may be eligible.

[WWW3.ERIE.GOV/SENIORSERVICES/HOME-DELIVERED-MEALS](http://WWW3.ERIE.GOV/SENIORSERVICES/HOME-DELIVERED-MEALS)

## Get help with a Self Referral Program

Get help connecting to resources related to food insecurity, financial issues, housing, transportation, health insurance, abuse, needing a higher level of care, substance use, domestic violence, home safety, lack of support, mental health, trouble affording medication and more.

[IHGWNY.COM/BLOG/MEDICAL-BLOG/ARTICLE.GET-HELP-WITH-THE-SELF-REFERRAL-PROGRAM/](http://IHGWNY.COM/BLOG/MEDICAL-BLOG/ARTICLE.GET-HELP-WITH-THE-SELF-REFERRAL-PROGRAM/)

## Stay Fit Dining Program

People aged 60+ can access hot, noontime meals at sites across Erie County. A \$3 contribution is suggested but not required. Advanced reservation is required. Call the site nearest you to reserve a meal.

[WWW3.ERIE.GOV/SENIORSERVICES/STAY-FIT-DINING](http://WWW3.ERIE.GOV/SENIORSERVICES/STAY-FIT-DINING)

## 211 WNY

Is your free and confidential link to health and human services. Call 2-1-1 to get information about where to get free food resources in your community, as well as other resources available for individuals and families. 211 is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

[WWW.211WNY.ORG](http://WWW.211WNY.ORG)

## FeedMore WNY

home delivered meals for seniors & disabled individuals, food pantry finder, mobile low-cost farmers market, & more

[WWW.FEEDMOREWNY.ORG/PROGRAMS-SERVICES/FINDFOOD/](http://WWW.FEEDMOREWNY.ORG/PROGRAMS-SERVICES/FINDFOOD/)

## Food Pantries

use this interactive map to find food pantries across Erie County and New York State

[MAP.THEFOODPANTRIES.ORG](http://MAP.THEFOODPANTRIES.ORG)

Scan with  
your phone  
to read or  
share this  
information  
online.



[www.ihgwny.com](http://www.ihgwny.com)



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