



Shopping on a Budget

Session Overview

In this session, participants will learn ways to save money when purchasing food. An educator will provide tips to help participants before going to the store, at the store and when at home. Participants will practice using grocery store circulars to identify sale items, coupons and other ways to save money on healthy foods. The group will discuss how to effectively use foods that are less expensive when purchased in bulk and share their personal shopping tips.

Target Audience: English and Spanish speaking adults

Group Size: 5-30 participants

Time Needed: 30-45 minutes

Behavioral Objectives:

After the session participants will be able to:

1. List three shopping tips that can help families buy more nutritious foods for less money.
2. Name two benefits of using a grocery store circular.
3. Describe how to effectively use foods that are less expensive when purchased in bulk quantities.

Key Message:

By making a list and applying practical shopping tips, families can prepare healthy meals on a limited budget.

Materials Needed for Session:

- Primary handouts: WIC *Smart Shopping Tips*¹ and *Be a Smart Shopper – Use Unit Prices*² handout (2-sided), WIC *Smart Shopping List*³
- 2 days of planned menus from last class or WIC *Sample Meal Plan*⁴
- Optional: WIC posters - *Be a Smart Shopper When Using Coupons* and *Look for Unit Prices on Store Shelves*⁵

Outline of 45-minute session: *(30 minute session in italics)*

- Welcome & introduction (1 min)
- Activity 1: Are You a Smart Shopper? (3 min.) *(3 min.)*
- Activity 2: Before You Shop (10 min.) *(6 min.)*
- Activity 3: Search for Savings (7 min.) *(omit)*
- Activity 4: At the Store (6 min.)
- Activity 5: What to Do at Home (5 min.)
- Activity 6: How to Use Food Bought in Bulk (10 min.) *(6 min.)*
- Conclusion and Evaluation (3 min)

Welcome to “Shopping on a Budget” (1 min)

1. Welcome and introduce the class topic *(If teaching this class as a series, review the past class and home activities – Refer to “Review” sheet.)*

Today we will continue our two-part class to help you eat right when money is tight. In part one, we discussed how to plan meals and in part two, we will discuss shopping tips. *(Distribute the handout packet.)*

2. Review the class objectives and the key message.

Activity 1: Are You a Smart Shopper? (3 min)

Here is the *Smart Shopping Tips* handout. As you read down the list, circle each tip you **DO NOT** practice now. How many of you have at least 4 of the tips circled? Let's look more closely at these tips and think about what we need to do before we shop, at the store, and when we come home.

Activity 2: Before You Shop (10 min)

1. **Plan Meals** – Look at your meal plans from our last class or at the *Sample Meal Plan* handout. This plan will help you prepare healthy meals and snacks. Think about foods or ingredients that you already have and what you need to buy at the store.
2. **Make a Shopping List** – A list will help you stick to your plan. It will help you save time finding the items you need and save money when you don't buy extra items you don't need. We used the food groups to develop your meal plan. You can organize the shopping list the same way by using the *Smart Shopping List* handout. Some people prefer to organize their shopping list by areas in the store, such as produce, canned goods, frozen foods, etc. Find a way that works for you.

Activity: Write at least 3 items on your shopping list and the amount you will need based on your meal plan. Did you include enough for the whole week if you are using that food more than once?

3. **Find What's on Sale** – Look for coupons and specials that match your shopping list. You can change your meal plan based on the store's specials and coupons.
4. **Eat Before You Shop** – Going to the store hungry can make you want to buy more than you planned.
5. **Decide Where to Shop**
 - Large or chain store: non-perishable foods may be less expensive
 - Smaller markets: Produce and perishable items may be less expensive

Activity: Tell the person next to you what store you shop at and give them at least 2 reasons you like this store, such as prices, selection, quality of produce, location, etc.

Activity 3: Search for Savings (7 min)

You can find items that are on sale by looking at the grocery store ads and circulars. Look at the store flyer you brought or a sample circular. You can learn what fruits and vegetables are in season and at special prices. There may be coupons or “buy one get one free” and other special deals. Some grocery stores and companies offer coupons or additional savings on their websites.

Activity: Working alone or in groups, use the store flyer and MyPlate to create a dinner for a family of 4 that costs less than \$10 or less than \$2.50 per person. Would anyone like to share their meal idea?

Activity 4: At the Store (6 min)

1. Use coupons and look for specials
 - Look for “buy one get one free” offers - even when using WIC checks
 - Compare prices with and without a coupon. Sometimes store brand prices are less expensive than the coupon savings.
2. Use unit prices to find the better buy. Let's look at the *Be a Smart Shopper – Use Unit Prices* information on the back side of *Smart Shopping Tips* handout. Similar products come in different size packages and cost different amounts. Sometimes this makes it difficult to know which one is lower in cost but using the unit price will help you.

- Look at the yogurt containers on your handout. One is large and the other is small but which is cheaper per ounce?
 - The large container costs \$2.99 but is only 9.3¢ per ounce
 - The small container only costs 85¢ but is 14.2¢ per ounce
 - Which container is the better value? (*Large container*)
 - Look at the cheese products at the bottom of your handout. One is block cheese and the other is grated cheese but which is cheaper per ounce?
 - How much is the 16-ounce package of block cheese? (\$4.59) How much per ounce? (28.7¢)
 - How much is the 8-ounce package of grated cheese? (\$2.89) How much per ounce? (36.1¢)
 - Which package is the better value? (*Block cheese*)
3. Use a store savings card and store brands if they are cheaper.
 4. Be aware of the placement of items in the store.
 - Look on lower shelves for better deals. Brand-name companies pay to have their products at eye level to get you to buy them. The same is true for the displays at end of aisles and checkout stand items. Think twice before buying if these items are not on your list.
 - Fresh foods are placed around the perimeter of most stores. Fill your cart with the fresh items first and then shop the center aisles.
 5. Buy plain vegetables and meats, then add your own seasonings for a healthier choice that usually costs less.
 6. Buy lean ground beef and turkey, and skinless chicken when they are on sale and freeze some for later use.
 7. Buy fresh fruits and vegetables in season to save money and get the best quality and flavor.

Activity: Look on page 2 in your cookbook and find the *Seasonal Guide to Fruits and Vegetables*. Who can tell me what fresh fruits and vegetables might be a good buy right now in this season? Who can tell me what fresh fruits and vegetables are available year-round?

Activity 5: What to Do at Home (5 min)

1. Store foods right away to preserve freshness. Divide foods into smaller portions and freeze some for later.
2. Use foods with the earliest expiration dates first.
3. Remember to involve your kids when planning, shopping, preparing and serving meals.

Optional - Here are some ways to get children of any age involved in family meals. Please add your ideas.

Ages 1 – 3:

Wash fruits and vegetables; tear lettuce

Carry unbreakable items to the table

Choose a fruit or vegetable at the store or for a meal or snack

Ages 4 – 5:

Measure and add dry ingredients; stir

Help choose a recipe

Set table and wipe up after meal

Ages 6 – 8:

Measure and add wet ingredients; peel, mash, cut soft foods with plastic knife

Help gather ingredients for a recipe

Ages 9 – 12:

Help with grocery list; select vegetables, fruits, meats
Use a knife with supervision
Use stovetop and microwave with supervision

Ages 13 – 16:

Plan a complete meal
Prepare meal with limited supervision
Experiment with recipes spices and toppings

Activity 6: How to Use Food Bought in Bulk (10 min)

Whether it's a gift, something on sale or a bag at the food pantry, items in bulk can save you money. You can often divide items into smaller amounts and freeze some for future use. If storage is limited, you can share items and split the costs with a friend. You can also use the items in as many different recipes as possible. Let's see how creative we can be in finding ways to use large quantities of certain foods.

Activity: I went to the store and food pantry today and came home with 3 pounds of carrots, 5 loaves of bread and 10 cans of fruit. I need your help in finding ways to use these foods. Work alone, with a partner or in a small group to find ways to use one or all of these items. You will have 2 minutes to come up with as many different menu or recipe ideas as possible then we will share our creative ideas!

3 pounds of carrots: Cooked carrots with herbs, glazed carrots, carrot salad, carrot cake, cook and use in recipes (*Chicken and Dumplings* from cookbook), use in soups and casseroles, carrot raisin pancakes, grate into spaghetti sauce, mix with taco meat, add to tossed salads, carrot sticks

5 loaves of bread: Sandwiches, toast, bread pudding, croutons, French toast, grilled cheese sandwiches, strata, "egg in a nest" (WIC cookbook), in place of hamburger and hot dog buns

10 cans of fruit (variety): Dessert, in pancake or as topping, snack, add to coleslaw or other vegetable salad, add to smoothie, blend as topping for frozen yogurt or low fat ice cream, cobblers, add to oatmeal or muffins, Breakfast Fruit Cup (*Network* recipe fruit on yogurt)

Conclusion and Evaluation: (3 min)

Be a smart shopper and get more from your food dollar. Take advantage of sale items, coupons, foods sold in bulk and other cost saving tips.

Home activities:

- Use a store circular to find fruits and vegetables on sale and one other healthy item that is a bargain.
- Find a new recipe for a fruit or vegetable that is on sale by looking in your cookbook or by going to the Champions for Change (www.CaChampionsforChange.net) or ChooseMyPlate.gov www.choosemyplate.gov/recipefinder websites.

Evaluation:

- Do you have any questions?
- Let's review. (*Distribute evaluation forms or conduct verbally.*)

Shopping on a Budget

After attending this class I feel confident that I can:

	Agree Very Much	Agree	I Am Not Sure	Disagree	Disagree Very Much
1) List three shopping tips that can help families buy more nutritious foods for less money.					
2) Name two benefits of using a grocery store circular.					
3) Describe how to effectively use foods that are less expensive when purchased in bulk quantities.					

Closing:

Thanks for attending the class and I hope you are now able to shop for healthy meals on a budget.

If part of a series of classes:

At our next class, we will talk about label reading. Please bring the labels from the box, bag or container of your favorite food and beverage items to our next meeting.

References:

¹Smart Shopping Tips, page 2, <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Documents/NE/WIC-NE-Heal-SmartShopperComparePrices-Worksheet-WorksheetCouponsTipsEnglish.pdf>

Shopping List: <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Documents/NE/WIC-NE-Heal-WhatsCookingItStartsWithAPlanAndAList-ShoppingList-English.pdf>

Be a Smart Shopper – Use Unit Prices - <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Documents/NE/WIC-NE-Heal-SmartShopperComparePrices-Worksheet-WorksheetUnitPricesNeedsflipEnglish.pdf>

Sample Meal Plan handout - <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Documents/NE/WIC-NE-Heal-WhatsCookingItStartsWithAPlanAndAList-Poster-SampleMealPlan11x15-Englsih.pdf>

⁵WIC Posters - *Be a Smart Shopper When Using Coupons* and *Look for Unit Prices on Store Shelves*
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/WICNEHEALEducationCampaigns.aspx>

For CalFresh information, call 1-877-847-3663. Funded by the USDA SNAP-Ed, an equal opportunity provider and employer. Visit www.CaChampionsForChange.net for healthy tips. ■ California Department of Public Health