



**Seaway Valley
Community Health Centre**
Working with you for a Healthier Community



Nutritious Meals on a Budget

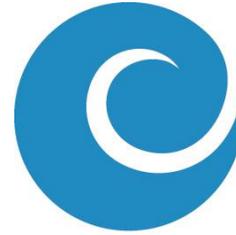
LINDSAY BOISVENUE, RD

Welcome!

Overview:

- **A bit about me and SVCHC**
- **Budgeting for food**
 - How to set a food budget
 - How to stick to your food budget
- **Turning your grocery haul into nutritious meals**
 - How to build a balanced meal
 - Meal planning and preparation
- **Questions/comments**





Seaway Valley Community Health Centre

Working with you for a Healthier Community

Who are we?

Seaway Valley
Community Health Centre

353 Pitt St.
(at Fourth St.)
Cornwall, ON

Offer a variety of
free programs & services
(virtual, telephone, and in-person)

www.seawayvalleychc.ca

Or follow us on Facebook!





Setting a Food Budget

Food Budget

- **What is a food budget and why is it important?**
 - The amount of money dedicated to spending on food
 - Can be monthly, weekly, bi-weekly (whatever suits your needs)
 - Helps you spend within your means; prevents over-spending on groceries each month
 - Takes into account other monthly expenses (ie: bills, rent, etc); finds a comfortable amount you can feed your family without breaking the bank



Creating a Food Budget

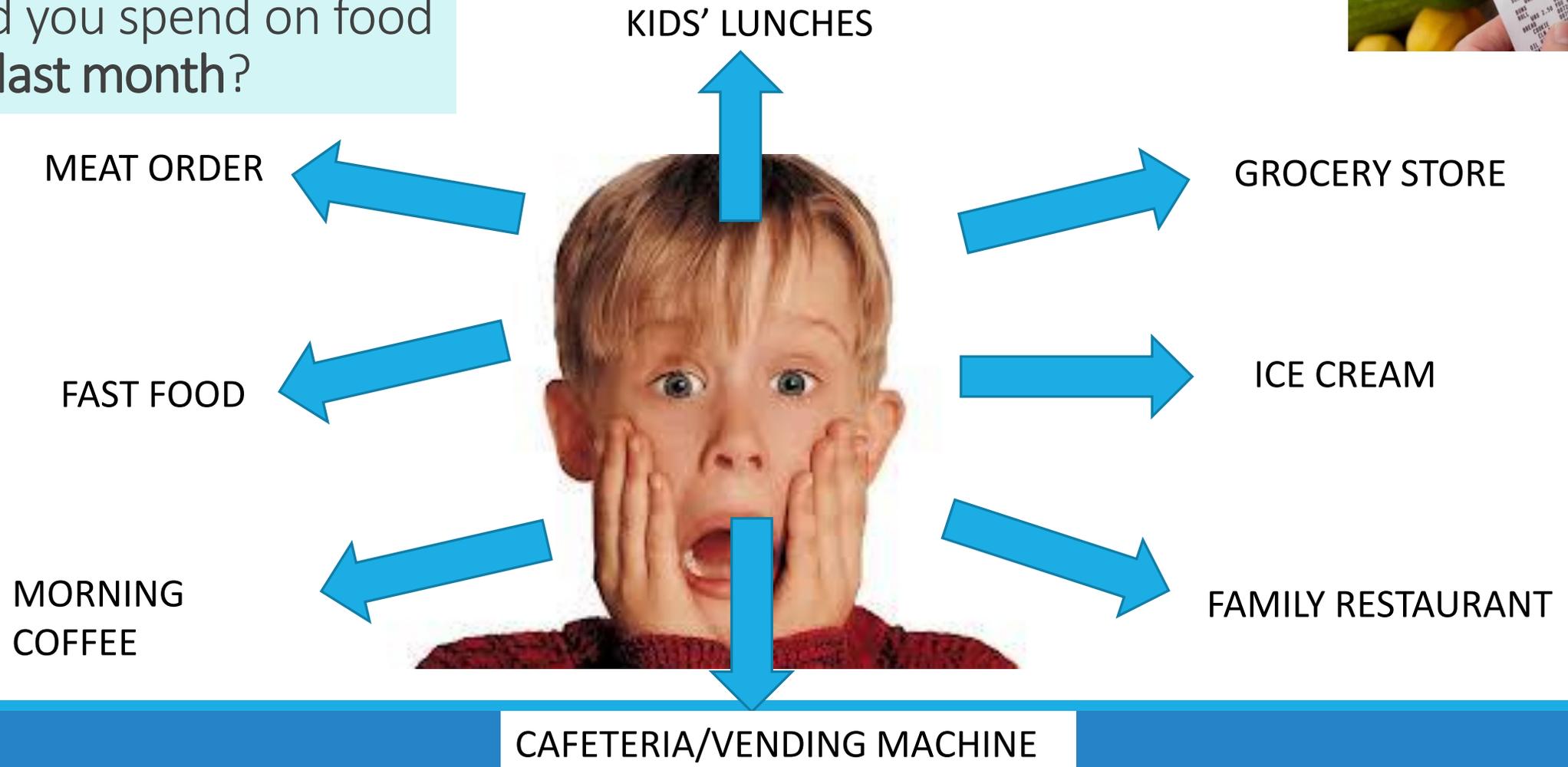
- The best place to start: **review all of your expenses**
 - Where does your money go each month?
 - Ex: rent/mortgage, utilities, transportation, insurance, food, debts, sports, subscriptions, savings, etc
- How does that **compare to your income?**
 - How does money come in?
 - Ex: pay cheques, government, savings, etc.
- **Where does this leave you at the end of the month?**



Reviewing Your Food Expenses



What did you spend on food last month?



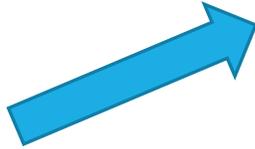
CAFETERIA/VENDING MACHINE

Creating a Food Budget

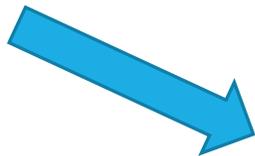
Once you know HOW MUCH you spend



Decide how much you CAN or WANT to spend



Be realistic.
Start small



Once you have an idea of the monthly amount you'd like to spend on groceries, **divide that number into smaller amounts**, based on how many trips to the grocery store you'll make (eg. each week)

Next Up: Keeping Track of Your Food Budget

METHOD #1: USE CASH

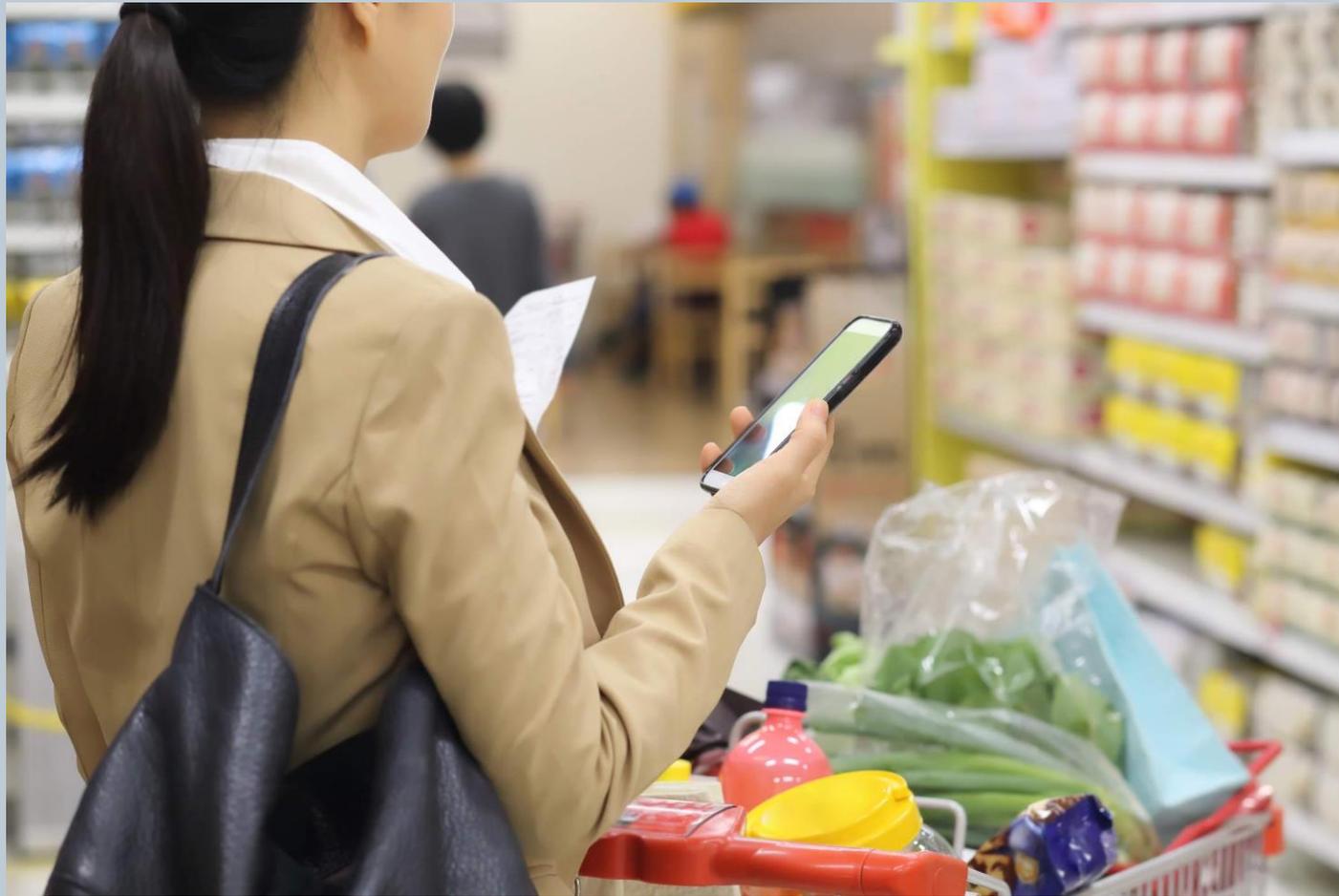
- Take out the amount you need for food that month and set it aside (e.g. in an envelope)
 - Number of envelopes depends on the number of grocery trips



METHOD #2: APPS/WEBSITES

- Various options to track receipts and spending
- Some link to your bank account
- Free and paid options
 - Examples: MINT, YNAB, WALLY, etc





Sticking To Your Food Budget

Useful Tools



Flyers (paper or digital)



- Use your ad bags, or digital flyers to find out what's on sale
- Build your weekly menu around these sales
- Consider using an app to compare prices/deals (ie: Flipp, Reebee)

Coupons



- Check the newspaper, your mail, ad bags, and websites for coupons
- Match coupons with sale items to save the most money
- Always compare price of generic brands

Price Matching



- Store matches a competitor's lower advertised price
- Can help you avoid driving to multiple stores for deals
- Cornwall locations: FreshCo, No Frills, Giant Tiger

Useful Tools



More deals. Made easy.



Reward/Loyalty Programs



- Most stores offer loyalty programs that are free to join
- Typically benefit from member-only discounts that automatically deduct at checkout (no need to clip coupons)

Flash Food Programs



- No Frills is part of the Flash Food Program where you can purchase food (through an app) at a reduced price due to need for quick use
- Great option for meat/bread that you can freeze

Reduced Pricing for “Quick Use”



- Most stores sell food that is going bad at reduced price (bakery, meat, produce)
- A great option for meat/bread/produce that you can freeze or use that night

Useful Tools



Unit Prices



- Unit price tells you how much something costs per “unit” (or per 100 g / 100 mL) – usually in small print under the price
- Compare with other products to get most bang for your buck

Generic Brands



- Generic brands are usually cheaper than the big brand names, equally as nutritious/tasty
- Experiment when they go on sale (cereal, pasta, sauces, etc)

Bulk Bins



- Beneficial for grains, nuts, spices – allows you to take the amount you need without having to buy a large amount for more money

Helpful Tips

Keep your pantry well-stocked with the basics.

- Pantry foods can make meal planning/prep quick and easy when you have staple items on-hand
- Tend to have long shelf-life; try to buy a few at a time when on sale (when able/space to store)
- **Some handy pantry items to have on-hand are:**
 - Packages of instant rice
 - Pasta
 - Canned fish/canned meat
 - Dried or canned beans/peas/lentils
 - Broth, sauces and/or soups
 - Diced/crushed tomatoes
 - Peanut and other nut butters



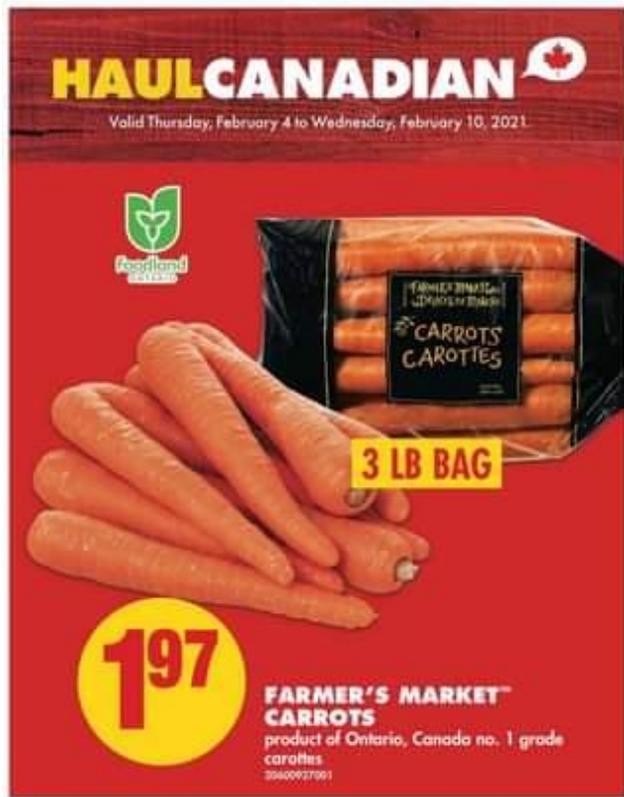
Helpful Tips

Avoid convenience foods when able.

- Consider how much time you really save by purchasing a specific convenience food?
- If you have the time, you can save money by making your own veg/salads/sauces
- Or, work out in your food budget – is it worth it to pay for convenience?
- **Some ways you can save money:**
 - Make your own flavoured packets of oats
 - Buy oats in bulk – takes a few extra minutes to cook
 - Chop your own vegetables rather than buying pre-cut
 - Chop and freeze produce that's going bad instead of buying frozen pre-chopped



Example



\$ 0.15/100g



vs

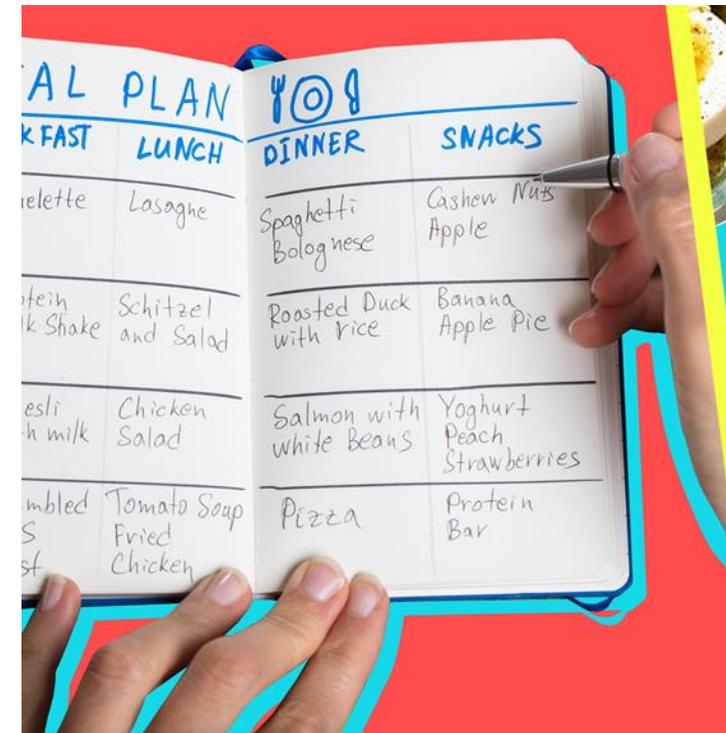


@~\$2.99/bag = \$0.66/100g

Helpful Tips

Meal Plan.

- **Prioritize 10-15 minutes a week to brainstorm meals**
 - Base this time slot around your flyers/grocery shopping day
- **Write down your selected meals**
 - Use a calendar, Word document, Notes app, notebook, etc
 - Pro tip: keep your meal plans for future use
- **Create a grocery list based on ingredients needed, what you already have on hand, what's on sale and where you need to go**
 - Use flyers or apps like Flipp and Reebee to help you organize your list



Other Benefits of Meal Planning



More likely to eat nutritious meals.

Increases the variety of nutrients in your diet.

Reduces likelihood of ordering take-out.

Often reduces food waste.

Saves time and energy in the kitchen.

Can reduce stress/anxiety around food and eating.



Helpful Tips

Stick to your grocery list.



- Figure out **what works best for you** for grocery shopping - try to make it a **routine**
 - Do you prefer popping into the store a few times a week, or going once a week?
 - If using coupons or price matching, going when the store is quieter may be easier
- Consider dividing your list into the stores you're going to for sales to save time
- Divide your list into "departments" to avoid mindlessly walking through aisles
- If you see a deal, ask yourself: "Do I need it?" – this can help avoid impulse buys
- Avoid going shopping when hungry (or with hungry kids)

Helpful Tips

Put in some time to prepare meals/snacks in advance.

- To prevent food waste and help ensure you will actually use the food/make the meals, prioritize some time after grocery shopping to meal prep
- **Wash and cut fresh produce when you get home**
 - Can help increase fruit/veg intake when prepped and ready to go
 - Makes for a quick and easy snack (grab and go)
 - Cuts down prep time during the week nights
- **Prep foods that take the longest to cook in advance**
 - Marinate your protein (make sure to read recipes in advance)
 - Pre-cook grains, proteins in large batches to speed up week night meals and to have leftovers (“cook once, eat twice”)





How to Plan Nutritious Meals

What makes a meal nutritious?

- Having **balance** amongst different foods! A **balanced meal** includes a **variety of foods** that **offer a variety of nutrients**
- **When consumed together, they:**
 - Provide longer-lasting energy
 - Promote fullness
 - Provide a greater chance of meeting your daily nutrient requirements
- **Balanced meals help nourish your body throughout the day, which:**
 - Helps decrease mindless snacking and overeating due to increased hunger
 - Helps increase your energy levels, blood sugars, mood (*which impacts food choices/cravings*)
 - Helps decrease stress and anxiety around food; *no food rules – just aiming for balance*



How to plan a balanced meal

- Let's think about our food in groupings:

FRUITS
&
VEG

CARBOHYDRATE
FOODS

PROTEIN
FOODS

SOURCES
OF
FAT

- To plan a balanced meal would mean including foods from most (if not all) of these groupings in your meal
- May not be able to do this 100% of the time – **and that is okay**



Here are some examples of a balanced meal



***Notice: quality nutrition does not have to be extreme/fancy!**

Fruits & Vegetables

Have plenty of
vegetables and fruits



Fruits & vegetables are an important part of a balanced meal and snack

- **They provide us with**
 - Vitamins & minerals
 - Fibre
 - Hydration
- Including fruits & vegetables in your meals & snacks can help lower your risk of chronic disease!

How can we incorporate fruit more often?

MEALS

- Smoothies
- Add to salads for a change
- Include a serving with breakfast daily
- Add to cereals (hot or cold)
- Add dried to fruit to cereals (hot or cold)



SNACKS

- Snack on raw fruit
- Add to muffins/baked goods
- Snack on dried fruit/add to trail mix
- Dip grapes or berries in yogurt and freeze
- Make your own popsicles/yogurt pops with fruit and yogurt



How can we incorporate vegetables more often?

MEALS

- Aim for a side of veg at lunch & supper
- Consider if pre-made or bagged salads fit your budget (convenient but more \$\$)
- Add more to sauces/soups/chilis/casseroles
- Add to potatoes or eggs (think peppers, spinach, onions, celery)
- Load up your sandwiches!
- Top extra on your pizza (homemade, frozen or takeout!)
- Blend into a smoothie

SNACKS

- Grate or mash into baked goods
- Snack on raw veggies



What fruits & veg should I add to my grocery list?

- Remember that having **any type** of fruit/vegetable is better than none!
- **Canned and frozen** vegetables/fruit are JUST as good as fresh
(no added salt)
- Work with whatever fits your **budget**



Fibre-rich Carbohydrates

Fibre-rich carbohydrates are an important addition to a balanced meal and snack

- Carbohydrates that **contain whole grains** or are **high in fibre** contain more nutrients than refined grain products (like white bread)
- **Fibre is important because it helps to:**
 - Prevent spikes in blood sugar
 - Fill you up and keep you feeling full for longer
 - Improve digestion and overall gut health
 - Reduce risk of chronic disease



Fibre-rich Foods

- Whole grain breakfast cereals
- Whole wheat pasta, fibre-fortified pasta, brown rice, quinoa, barley, bulgur
- Whole grain bread/bread products
- Oats
- Fruits, vegetables, potatoes with the skin on
- Nuts & seeds
- Beans, peas, lentils



How can we incorporate fibre-rich foods more often?

MEALS

- Have a side of potatoes (keep the skin on!)
- Use whole grain or fibre enriched pasta
- Include oatmeal and other high-fibre cereals at breakfast
- Incorporate plant-based protein like beans, peas and lentils into your meals (think chilis, soups, tacos, burritos, nachos!)
- Whole grain bread products (tortillas, dinner rolls)
- Add grains like bulgur, barley, rice, quinoa to soups & salads

SNACKS

- Add oats to muffins/baked goods
- Use whole wheat flour in muffins/baked goods
- Snack on whole wheat pita bread or crackers with hummus



Adding fibre-rich foods to your grocery list

Less Expensive Options

Frozen fruit & vegetables (keep longer in freezer)

Canned fruit, applesauce & vegetables (keep longer in pantry)

Oats (less expensive to buy big bag compared to instant packets)

Whole grain pasta/Instant or bulk brown rice

Canned or dried beans, peas, lentils

Potatoes

Options To Consider When On Sale/Needed

Nuts, trail mix

Seeds (pumpkin, chia, ground flax)

Dried fruit

Whole grain bread products (bread, buns, bagels, English muffins, tortillas, pitas) **freeze to keep fresh for longer*

High fibre crackers, high fibre cereals

Avocados, fresh fruit/vegetables



Sources of Protein



Mostly protein:

- Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, tofu

Some protein:

- Legumes, nuts, nut butters, seeds, seed butters, milk, cheese, cottage cheese, soy beverages, yogurt

A little protein:

- Whole grain breads, rice, pasta, quinoa, barley



By aiming for a “balanced plate” and having a source of protein at meal/snack time, you are usually able to meet your daily protein needs.

How can we incorporate protein more often?

MEALS

- Add a boiled egg to your salad
- Mash a boiled egg onto toast
- Add leftover meat to a salad/soup/sandwich
- Add fish/meat (fresh or canned) to sandwiches, salads, pastas or make patties
- Have a side of cheese to boost the protein
- Nut/seed butter to your sandwich or crackers
- Add grains or legumes to your soups & salads
- Beans, lentils, tofu to stir fry/soup/casserole

SNACKS

- Snack on a boiled egg
- Slice of cheese, bowl of cottage cheese
- Greek or Icelandic yogurt
- Snack on nuts
- Roast chickpeas, boil edamame
- Nut/seed butter with fruit/veg/crackers



Adding protein foods to your grocery list

Less Expensive Options

Canned or dried beans, peas, lentils

Eggs

Nut butter *(has a long shelf-life)*

Canned meat/fish (sardines, chicken, ham, tuna, salmon)
(long shelf-life)

Greek or Skyr yogurt *(contain more protein than regular yogurt)*,
Regular yogurt, cottage cheese

Sunflower seeds

Powdered milk *(can use as a low-cost protein powder)*

Options To Consider When On Sale

Meat/fish

Nuts

Seeds (pumpkin, hemp, chia)

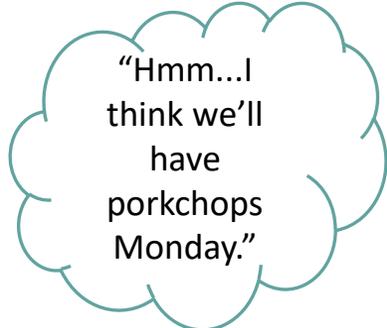
Tofu

Plant-based meat alternative options





Tips for planning balanced meals



- **Basic meals are key!**

- Note what you already have at home, review your flyers and plan around these items!
 - Are porkchops on sale? Do you already have potatoes at home? Add a veg and plan this as a meal.
- Don't forget to consider **leftovers or freezer meals** and plan these into the week
 - Have a lasagna in the freezer? Plan lasagna for supper and leftover lasagna as lunch the next day.
- Try to plan meals that contain the **same ingredients** to reduce waste and save money
 - Purchasing 4 chicken breasts but only using 2? Plan another meal that will use up the other 2
 - Buying a whole box of spinach but only need a bit? Use the rest in a pasta recipe or make a big spinach salad for the week
- Remember to plan your sides to help achieve a balanced plate



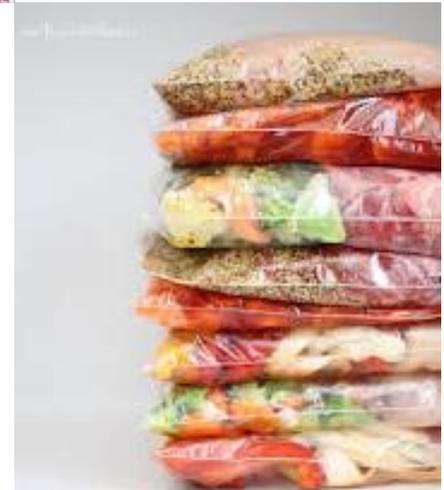
Tips for planning balanced meals

- Flip through your cookbooks, use Pinterest, or google search meal ideas
- If your week is busy, plan to use equipment that facilitates cooking (*slow cooker, Instant Pot, air fryer, rice cooker*)
- Consider sheet pan and/or one-pot meals



Tips for planning balanced meals

- Take advantage of the time spent making a meal, and make two or three of it to freeze for later (if able)!
- **Chili, soups, sauces**
 - Make a large batch and freeze half
- **Lasagna, or casseroles**
 - Buy extra ingredients (if able) to make two or three of the meal & freeze
- **Crock pot and/or sheet pan meals**
 - Throw ingredients together in freezer bags, label, and pull out of the freezer to dump in the crock pot/sheet pan on a lazy Sunday!



SUMMARY



Creating a food budget helps you spend within your means, keeping in mind what's important for your family's unique needs

There are many ways to save money on food, helping you to stick to your food budget – but you have to put in the time!

Balanced meals include a variety of foods and nutrients, helping you nourish your body and provide long lasting energy throughout the day

Meal planning is an important strategy to help you achieve cost-effective, balanced meals & snacks for you and your family

Support at SVCHC

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more information on what
we offer:
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