# Eating on a budget

## Planning your meals and snacks

- Plan your main meals ahead and write a shopping list of food you will need to buy.

- Choose foods from the five food groups when planning your meals and snacks:

    - Grain (cereal) foods

    - Vegetables and beans/legumes

    - Fruit

    - Dairy and dairy alternatives

    - Meat and meat alternatives

- Meat and chicken can be expensive. When they're on sale, you might like to buy in bulk and freeze individual portions. Try cheaper protein-rich foods like tinned fish, eggs or legumes (lentils, baked beans and chickpeas). See the Lean Meats and Alternatives handout for more information.

- Buy fruit and vegetables when they are in season. Often, this means they will be cheaper and better quality.

- Frozen or tinned fruit and vegetables can be cheaper than fresh and just as nutritious.

## Shopping hints

- Make a shopping list and stick to it. If you find this hard, you might find doing your shopping online and getting it delivered is a good option.

- Avoid shopping when you are hungry – it is more tempting to buy foods not on your list.

- Buy brands on special or 'no name' brands – for example, home brand products.

- Try not to include 'sometimes foods' such as cakes, biscuits, lollies and soft drinks in every shop.

- Bulk purchase and specials are only worthwhile if you can store them correctly (for example, by freezing half) and use them by their 'use by' date.

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# Cooking hints

- Making food at home is often cheaper and more nutritious. Try making your own biscuits, muffins, scones, soups and pizza.

- Homemade soups and stews are a great way to use leftovers and reduce your food waste. Cook in bulk and freeze leftovers in single serve containers. Make sure to clearly label containers so you know what is in them and when it was cooked.

- Use recipes with cheaper cuts of meat (such as casseroles) – just be sure to trim the fat off before cooking.

- Bulk out meat dishes by adding vegetables, lentils or legumes. You can also try adding grated zucchini to patties or red kidney beans in spaghetti bolognaise and tacos.