



## How to Eat Healthfully on a Budget

You already know you should eat more whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. But healthier foods are often more

expensive. Here are some tips to help you eat healthfully without spending a lot more money.

**Find healthy menus and recipes** online, in magazines, and in cookbooks. Your local library is a great resource for healthful cooking ideas.

**Build your meals around legumes** (e.g., beans, lentils) and grains (e.g., whole-grain rice and pasta) rather than meats. Treat meats and dairy foods as side dishes and eat them less frequently, as recommended by

the food guide pyramid (available at [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)).

**Prepare foods "from scratch"** rather than from packages.

**Write out a shopping list** to help you avoid expensive "impulse" purchases.

**Limit your trips to the grocery store.** Plan a week or two of healthful meals in advance.

**Shop when you are full** so you aren't tempted to buy expensive convenience foods and snacks.

**Look for specials and coupons** to reduce your out-of-pocket costs, but only use a coupon if it's for an item your family will use.

**Use generic or store brands**, which are often less expensive than name brands, but are of the same quality.

**Select fresh fruits and vegetables** that are in season. Large bags of frozen fruits and vegetables are often less expensive than out-of-season foods.

**Stock up on healthy staple items** (e.g., oats, dried beans, peanut butter, low-sodium canned tomatoes) when they are on sale. Larger sizes usually cost less per serving and are a better deal if you have the room to store them and can afford the larger containers.

**Check out the "bulk food" section** of the grocery store. Many times these foods have the best unit price.

**Buy only what you need**, when buying fresh foods, so they don't spoil before you get a chance to use them.

*U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2010.*

Read 101+ Ways to Save Food Dollars:  
[www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/H/HE-0757/HE-0757.pdf](http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/H/HE-0757/HE-0757.pdf)

## Why It's So Important to Protect Your Kidneys

Unless something goes wrong, people rarely think about their kidneys. But kidneys are crucially important to your health. If your kidneys fail, other important organs, such as your heart, liver, and bones, could be damaged as well. Here are some tips for staying on top of your kidney health:

- **Have your sugar (or glucose) levels checked.** Diabetes is the most common cause of kidney failure. So it is very important to know whether or not your glucose levels are normal, and to get treated if you have diabetes.
- **Have your blood pressure checked.** High blood pressure, left untreated, is another common cause of kidney disease. When your blood pressure remains high, it damages the blood vessels in the body including the vessels of the kidneys. Cutting back on salt and salty foods is one good thing you can do to prevent high blood pressure and protect your kidneys.
- **Achieve and maintain a healthy weight.** A recent study found that obese patients were at increased risk for a common and aggressive type of kidney cancer. Being

obese also increases the risk of kidney stones. Eating more fiber-rich foods helps decrease the risk for obesity and diabetes.

- **Eat a healthy diet.** Diets that are high in saturated fat can contribute to clogged arteries (atherosclerosis), including kidney arteries. Cholesterol deposits can also block the kidney arteries. That's why it is important to eat a balanced diet. Remember that a "heart-healthy" diet that is low in saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium is also a "kidney-healthy" diet.
- **Get plenty of exercise.** Exercising on most days of the week reduces the incidence of obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease, and other chronic disease. It is also important for kidney health.



- **Know your family health history.** A family history of kidney problems, such as kidney stones, will prompt your doctor to monitor you more carefully for specific conditions

*Journal of the British Association of Urological Surgeons. Jan. 2010.*

*The National Kidney Foundation. 2010.*

## Reduce Your Risk of Pancreatic Cancer

In 2009, more than 42,000 people in the United States were diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. It is the fourth leading cause of all cancer deaths.

The pancreas makes insulin and other hormones that help the body use or store the energy that comes from food.

The pancreas also makes enzymes that help digest food.

Research has shown that people with certain risk factors are more likely than others to develop pancreatic cancer. These include: being older than age 60, smoking, having diabetes, being male, being African American, and having a family history of pancreatic, colon, or ovarian cancer.

Eating a lot of fats and meats might also increase your risk. And a new study has found that drinking soft drinks might be a risk factor for pancreatic cancer.

In a 14-year study of 60,000 men and women, researchers found that people who drank 2 or more



soft drinks a week had an 87% increased risk of pancreatic cancer. These drinks might play a role in the abnormal division of cells as a result of higher blood sugar and insulin levels.

When researchers looked at 2 large studies (46,000 men and 117,000 women with 10 to 20 years of follow-up), they found that obesity and lack of physical activity increased the risk of pancreatic cancer. They also found that walking or hiking just 4 hours a week reduced the risk by 54%.

While there are many risk factors for pancreatic cancer that you can't change, you can reduce your risk by eating a plant-based diet, limiting sweetened drinks, exercising regularly, and not smoking.

*National Cancer Institute. 2010.*

*Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention. Feb. 2010.*

*Journal of the American Medical Association. Aug. 2001.*

## Help Your Kids Maintain a Healthy Weight

Nationwide, 1 in 4 preschoolers is excessively overweight and more likely to become an overweight adult. They may also develop type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and other illnesses that can follow them into adulthood.

Researchers recently discovered 3 lifestyle practices that reduced the rate of excess weight in children by about 40%:

1. **Eat nutritious dinners as a family** at least 5 times a week.
2. **Limit television viewing**, gaming, and other "screen time" to less than 2 hours daily.
3. **Set an early enough bed time** so that your children get more than 10½ hours of sleep each night.

Pick one of the healthy behaviors and practice it until it becomes a habit.

In the study, doing just one of the lifestyle practices decreased the risk of excess weight by nearly 25%. When you have mastered one healthy habit, add another.

*Pediatrics.*  
*Mar. 2010.*



MyPyramid Kids has nutrition tips for parents and activities for kids: [www.mypyramid.gov/kids](http://www.mypyramid.gov/kids)

### Weight-loss Tips

Because children grow at different rates at different times, it is not always easy to tell if a child is overweight. For example, it is normal for boys to have a growth spurt in weight and catch up in height later. Don't put your child on a diet. Limiting what children eat may interfere with their growth. Instead, adopt healthy eating and activity habits.

- Serve more fruits and vegetables.
- Replace soft drinks and high-fat or high-calorie snack foods with healthy snacks, such as baby carrots.
- Make sure your child eats a healthy breakfast every day.
- Eat fast-food less often and encourage your family to choose the healthier menu options, such as salads or small sandwiches.

- Offer your child water or low-fat milk more often than fruit juice.
- Plan healthy meals and eat together as a family.
- Try not to use food as a reward. Promising dessert to a child for eating vegetables, for example, sends the message that vegetables are less valuable than dessert.
- Start with small servings and let your child ask for more if he or she is still hungry.
- Instead of turning on the television, play tag or take a walk. Children need 60 minutes of physical activity daily.
- If you are still concerned that your child is overweight, talk with your pediatrician or family doctor.

*National Institutes of Health. 2010.*

### ASK THE WELLNESS DOCTOR

**Q:** Is there a minimum amount of salt needed in my diet?

**A:** Go to [www.wellsense.info/wn/ask-SaltMinimum.pdf](http://www.wellsense.info/wn/ask-SaltMinimum.pdf) to read the answer from Don Hall, DrPH, CHES.

To ask your question, email: [paulaw@wellsense.com](mailto:paulaw@wellsense.com), subject line: Ask the Wellness Doctor. Emails with any other subject line will be directed to the spam folder.