

FACT SHEET

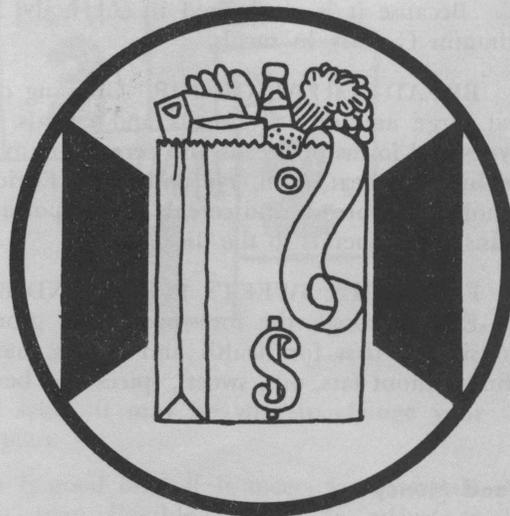
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PLAN FOR FOOD SHOPPING

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Shopping for food to assure a well nourished family is a challenge for any homemaker. It is especially so for the homemaker with limited food dollars.

Food spending records

To improve your food shopping, keep a record of money spent for a week's food. Study the record to find weaknesses and strengths in your shopping plan.

Menu planning

Plan meals and snacks to meet nutritional needs of family members by considering their activities, sex and age.

Calorie needs vary. Your husband is probably taller and heavier than you and requires more food, but both of you need to consider your activity. Most young homemakers use much energy caring for children and cooking meals. A husband who drives a tractor needs more calories than the one who does office work.

Nutritional needs of children vary with age, size and activity. Children who have ravenous appetites during growth spurts may pick at their food during growth lags.

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Many different kinds of foods are available from which to choose. Take advantage of variety when planning meals and snacks. Use the Daily Food Guide in planning. Include foods from the basic four groups before planning for other foods.

Shopping lists

First check the food you have on hand, starting with perishable items. Then make a shopping list as you review your menus and decide which foods to buy. Organize your list according to the four food groups.

MEAT GROUP: Most homemakers plan their meals around meats because meat accounts for so much of the food dollar. Plan for a variety of beef, veal, pork, lamb, poultry or fish. Also consider eggs and meat alternates such as dry beans, peas, nuts and peanut butter.

MILK GROUP: Children require large quantities of milk and milk products. Choose evaporated, dry or fresh fluid milk according to your needs. To save money, replace some whole fresh milk with non-fat dry milk. Also use some cheese.

FRUIT-VEGETABLE GROUP: Fruits and vegetables present a shopping problem because so many interesting choices are available (frozen, fresh, canned and dehydrated) and because prices for fresh fruits and vegetables change with the seasons.

Be sure your family has an adequate supply of dark green, leafy and bright yellow vegetables. These are especially high in vitamin A.

Fresh fruits and vegetables add vitamin C, variety and taste appeal to the diet. Raw and processed citrus fruits are especially high in vitamin C. Because it is not stored in the body, include vitamin C daily in meals.

BREAD-CEREAL GROUP: Growing children eat large amounts of breads and cereals. Many types and forms of breads and cereals are available, including wheat, corn, rye and rice. Enriched or whole grain breads and cereals add important vitamins and minerals to the diet.

FATS, OILS, SWEETS, SPICES AND BEVERAGES: Although the four basic food groups are considered first for health and fitness, meals are dull without fats, oils, sweets, spices and beverages.

Food Money

Considerable money spent for food does not assure a well balanced diet. It can generally be said that the lower the income, the higher is the percentage of income spent for food. Stretch the food dollar to cover foods from all basic food groups. Overspending for meat-group foods, for example, could mean insufficient money for other basic groups and an inadequate intake of essential nutrients.

Allow some money in your shopping plan for special family treats. The fun and enjoyment of a special treat may have greater value for your family than the money saved by rigid controls. Avoid a plan so strict that it takes all the fun out of shopping.

Food shopping time

Time creates problems for many young homemakers. Know the layout of the stores where you shop. Make your grocery list in the order food items appear in the store to avoid retracing your steps.

Convenience foods

The extent to which you buy convenience foods with built-in services (such as instant potatoes) depends on the time you want to spend in cooking, how well your family enjoys these foods and how economical it is to buy the ingredients.

Some convenience foods are as inexpensive as those prepared from scratch. Comparative shopping helps you find the most economical foods.

Family preferences

When planning for food, consider your family's likes and dislikes. Food you prepare will do your family no good unless it is eaten. One way of satisfying the family is to think of foods your family likes from each of the basic four food groups.

Importance placed on food

How important is food to you? Some homemakers place little value on foods and high value on other things. For example, a homemaker who values spending time with her children more than preparing homemade food may spend more money on convenience foods. On the other hand, the homemaker who values the home preparation may spend less money for convenience food and more time preparing home cooked meals.

Seasonal foods

Foods in season are generally less expensive than canned and frozen foods. However, this is not always true. For example, frozen orange juice is usually less expensive than canned or fresh. Foods in plentiful supply are usually less expensive and are announced monthly on radio and in newspapers by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Quantities to buy

Storage facilities, use and keeping quality of the food influence the amounts you buy. For example, 25 pounds of flour could be economical for a large family who has plenty of storage space and prepares most baked foods from scratch. Buying in large quantities for the small family with limited storage facilities, however, may mean weevils will infest the flour before it is used.

Newspaper ads and specials

Any good shopper knows that real bargains can be found in newspaper ads. Take advantage of advertised specials. Knowing the regular price of foods enables you to recognize special prices.

Store types

Will you shop at a supermarket, neighborhood grocery store, drive-in or roadside market? Are the foods you want available at your nearest store? As

you study the specials, you may want to shop at the place with the lowest prices. Consider time and transportation costs. How often do you shop? Planning can help you cut down on shopping trips.

Following your shopping plan

Do you plan to do the food shopping alone or with another family member?

If you take children along, you may be tempted to buy extras to satisfy their impulsive desires. In a study of children's influence on family food buying, 75 percent of homemakers shopping with children bought something at a child's suggestion.¹

Most food shoppers, however, make some in-store or impulse decisions. Candies, snack foods, crackers, cookies and new products are items shoppers tend to buy on impulse. Attractive packaging, display techniques and curiosity about new products trigger impulse buying.²

Store specials may cause a change in plans. One item in a food group may cost less than the item originally planned. If the nutritional value re-



mains the same, it may be wise to change your shopping plan.

A plan is good only if it meets family needs. Keep your plan flexible enough to adjust to changed situations.

References

1. Dickens, D. and Johnson, A., *Children's Influence on Family Food Purchase Decisions*, Bulletin 671, September 1963, Mississippi State University Experiment Station, State College, Mississippi.
2. Kinder, Faye, *Meal Management*, The MacMillan Company, New York, 1968.

