



Doctor Aviva's top tips for eating healthy on a budget

Eating healthy doesn't have to be hard, yet I know the cost of healthy food to some may seem prohibitive. There needs to be a paradigm shift in how we look at purchasing healthy food. When you buy healthy whole foods, you want to look at it as an investment and what you are investing in is your future health as well as the health of your loved ones. As my dear friend Dr. Tieraona Low Dog says "Let's think about if we want to pay the farmer now or the pharmacist later."

In this handout, you will find my favorite tips for eating healthy on a budget. Even if you start to apply and practice a few of these tips, you will start to notice how much money you can save with a simple shift in how you look at healthy eating.

Tip #1: Meal Plan

Pick a day where you sit down to plan our your meals. You can plan for the whole week, or you can plan for three days at a time. Do what works best for you. Once

you have your meals drawn out, make your grocery list. This enables you to go to the store with a plan and make the commitment to stick to your plan!

Tip #2: Avoid The Dirty Dozen & Eat the Clean Fifteen

If buying organic is a stretch for you, make a commitment to avoid non-organic fruits and veggies found on the “Dirty Dozen” list from the Environmental Working Group and emphasize those found on their “Clean Fifteen” list. (See link below.)

Tip #3: Get To Know Your Farmers

CSA stands for Community Supported Agriculture. Typically the way a CSA works is you pay a fee upfront for the entirety of the growing season, and then each week you receive fresh, local and organic foods. Some CSAs offer monthly payment plans, as well as discounts if you volunteer to work on the farm, which is a wonderful experience for the kids. You are also able to purchase grass fed organic meats, poultry, eggs and some dairy from CSAs which is generally cheaper than purchasing from the grocery store.

Tip #4: Stick to the Perimeter of the Grocery Store as Much as Possible

If you are making the shift to a whole foods diet or a gluten-free diet, be wary of swapping one processed food for another. Pre-packaged foods, especially those labeled gluten-free, organic or healthy are often very expensive. Ask yourself, what could I eat instead – a \$5 bag of gluten free chips fried in coconut oil, or some chopped up carrots with some a homemade hummus that cost a total of \$3 to make?

Tip #5: Buy In Bulk

It may cost a bit more upfront, but you will be paying significantly less in the long run. This is especially true if you eat meat.

Tip #6: Cook Once, Eat Three Times

When cooking meals, make enough so that you and your family have leftovers for lunches, or make enough so that you can freeze the leftovers for those tough evenings when cooking is the last thing you want to do.

Tip #7 Look at your spending habits

This one is tricky for many but it's an incredibly important step if you are struggling to buy healthy foods. Take some time to look at all of your expenses. Do you pay for cable? How much? Are you buying a latte every day? How much do you spend on this per week? How often are you eating out? Where can you cut costs so that purchasing healthy food doesn't cause you stress?

Tip #8: Instead of Focusing on the Cost of Food, Focus on How You Want to Feel in Your Body. After all, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

This will help shift your perspective and beliefs. Ask yourself:

- What is having more energy worth?
- How much is feeling vibrant and health worth?
- What would it feel like to live a disease-free life?
- How much would I pay to be rid of my chronic pain?

Tip #9: Don't Shop on an Empty Stomach

Fact: We buy things we don't need and over-purchase when we shop when we're hungry. So make sure to eat first, shop later.

Tip #10 Join Thrive Market

Thrive Market is an awesome resource for purchasing healthy food, especially if you don't live in an area with a health food store. The prices are more often than not lower than you would see at Whole Foods. Some people compare it to a healthy version of Costco, with home delivery service.

Resources Mentioned:

Environmental Working Group (for the Dirty Dozen and Clean Fifteen lists)

- www.ewg.org/foodnews

Finding a CSA in your Area

- www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/community-supported-agriculture

Thrive Market

- www.thrivemarket.com