

# Healthy Meal Planning on a Budget

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## Lesson Goal:

Participants will prepare healthy meals for their families while staying within their food budget.

## Lesson Objectives:

After completing this lesson, participants will be able to:

1. Determine the amount of money available to spend on food each week.
2. Create a one week meal plan consistent with the dietary guidelines while staying within their food budget.
3. Create a shopping list based on the one week meal plan.

## Leader Resources:

- My Food Shopping List:  
[www.he.k-state.edu/fnp/displays/mypyramid/handouts/Kansas/shopping%20list.pdf](http://www.he.k-state.edu/fnp/displays/mypyramid/handouts/Kansas/shopping%20list.pdf)
- Budget Form: [http://nep.unl.edu/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=1cecb716-bc5f-4ca5-9d89-afc9630da78e&groupId=4091401](http://nep.unl.edu/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=1cecb716-bc5f-4ca5-9d89-afc9630da78e&groupId=4091401)
- Weekly Meal Plan: [http://nep.unl.edu/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=fe4b69bb-dc85-4849-b403-8a76102ddcab&groupId=4091401](http://nep.unl.edu/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=fe4b69bb-dc85-4849-b403-8a76102ddcab&groupId=4091401)
- 1 + 1 = 5, One Bag, One Week, Five Dinners:  
[www.nep.unl.edu](http://www.nep.unl.edu)

## Before the Meeting:

Read the leader and participant guides and the review the leader resources.

## At the Meeting:

### 1. Introduce yourself and the lesson topic.

*Ask Participants:* Have you ever asked yourself, “What meal can I make tonight?” Do you ever get ready to make dinner only to find you do not have the items you need? Do you ever run out of food? Do your children complain there is nothing in the house to eat?

*Tell Participants:* This lesson will discuss how to provide healthy meals for your family while on a limited budget by showing how to make a food budget, plan meals, and create a shopping list that will save you money, time and reduce stress.

*Ask Participants:* Make a list of your five favorite foods for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

*Tell Participants:* Making a meal plan is as simple as planning out your favorite meals. Use these meal ideas as you make your weekly food plan later on in the lesson.

### 2. Review Objective #1: After completing this lesson, participants will be able to determine the amount of money available to spend on food each week.

Food is an expense that should be listed on your monthly budget. If you do not have a budget, decide how much money you have available to spend on food each month. Remember to include the value of Food Stamps/SNAP benefits and WIC vouchers if you receive them.

Now figure out how much money you can spend on each trip to the store. If you shop once a week divide your monthly food budget by four to find out how much you have for food each week. For example, If your monthly food budget is \$200 and you shop every week, you will have \$50 to spend each week on food. (\$200 divided by 4 = \$50). Use the envelope method and place \$50 in each envelope. Include any Food Stamps/SNAP benefits or WIC vouchers. Label the envelopes “Week 1,” “Week 2,” “Week 3,” and “Week 4.”

*Have participants use budget sheet to plan a budget.*

3. **Review Objective #2:** After completing this lesson, participants will be able to create a one week meal plan consistent with the dietary guidelines while staying within their food budget.

Let’s get started by creating a meal plan for one day. We’ll do the first day as a group. Make a meal plan for dinner. Using the list of foods your family likes to eat for the evening meal, pick one main dish and write it down. What foods would you like to add to complete your evening meal? Try to include a food from each of the five food groups (grains, vegetables, fruit, milk, meat and beans).

*Have participants use the one week meal plan and the 1 + 1 = 5 (1 bag plus 1 week equals 5 meals hand-out)*

Make a meal plan for breakfast. Look at the list of foods you wrote down for breakfast. Decide what will be on the menu and write it down. Try to create a breakfast that includes food from three of the five food groups.

Make a meal plan for lunch. Using your list again, decide what you would like to have for lunch and write it down. If you plan to cook extra food at another meal, plan the leftovers into your lunch meal plan.

Snacks also are important, especially for children. Snacks provide a chance to include foods from the five food groups that may be missing from meals. Fruits, like apples and bananas, and vegetables, like carrots, make great, healthy snacks.

Now that you have a meal plan for one day, continue creating a meal plan for the rest of the week.

4. **Review Objective #3:** After completing this lesson, participants will be able to create a shopping list based on the one week meal plan.

Using a shopping list will help stretch food dollars, but only if you stick to it! After you have planned your week’s meals, read through each day’s meal plan and write down the foods you need and how much. As a group, plan a shopping list based on the first day’s meal plan. When you’re finished, complete the remainder of the shopping list on your own. Remember, you have planned to use food you already have on hand, so you will not need to buy everything on your meal plan. Keep a list handy. It helps to keep a piece of paper and a pencil in or near the kitchen so you can quickly find it to write down the food you need. Some people keep a list on the refrigerator.

*Have participants use the MyPyramid shopping list.*

# Evaluation

## Healthy Meal Planning on a Budget

Help us evaluate the value of this program and improve future programming by completing this evaluation. Please return it to the program instructor at the end of the presentation.

**1. How sure are you that you can create a food budget?**

- a. Very sure
- b. Sure
- c. Neither sure not unsure
- d. Unsure
- e. Very unsure

**2. How sure are you that you can compare food products to get the lowest cost product?**

- a. Very sure
- b. Sure
- c. Neither sure not unsure
- d. Unsure
- e. Very unsure

**3. What is the first step in creating a meal plan?**

- a. See how much money you have.
- b. Create a meal plan for the whole year.
- c. Make a list of food you already have on hand.
- d. Go shopping.

**4. How sure are you that you can make a one week meal plan that includes foods from all five food groups every day?**

- a. Very sure
- b. Sure
- c. Neither sure not unsure
- d. Unsure
- e. Very unsure

**5. Now that you have completed this lesson, please list one thing that you learned that will help you stretch your food dollars.**

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