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NF91-21 Cutting Family Living FOOD Expenses

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Cutting Family Living FOOD Expenses

Kathy Prochaska-Cue, Extension Family Economics and Management Specialist

Food at Home

- Don't overfeed your family! To protect both your family's health and the pocketbook, concentrate on nutritious food items.
- Use powdered milk. Prepare it the day before, and keep it cold before serving.
- Plan menus based on weekly specials and seasonal foods.
- Use coupons and special sales only to buy items you would normally buy anyway.
- Don't throw away leftovers, or avoid having them by preparing only needed amount. Mix small portions of vegetables together or use vegetables and meats in stews or soups.
- Avoid expensive home delivery services.
- If possible, grow some vegetables of your own. Can, freeze, or dry produce.
- Don't pay for labor unnecessarily. Cut your own stewing meat from inexpensive cuts. Buy whole chickens rather than the pieces if less expensive. Grate your own cheese.
- When buying sale items, make sure you are charged the sale price.
- Consider how food will be used and "end" result. Generic and house brands of canned tomatoes can be used in a cooked dish and are as nutritious as higher priced brands.
- Learn how to cook lower cost dishes.
- Compare: cost per serving; cost per unit — ounce, quart, etc.; brands.

- Buy produce in season.
- Use specials and coupons.
- Shop on "double coupon" and/or "double stamp" days.
- Store food carefully to avoid spoilage.
- Use foods while fresh.
- Plan use of leftovers.
- Entertain at home.
- Use and return returnable bottles.
- Shop at no-frills, low-cost stores.
- Use the Food Stamp program if you qualify.
- Use the Women, Infant and Children (WIC) nutrition program if you qualify.
- Contact a local "church pantry for assistance" if the family has immediate needs for food.

Food Away From Home

- Consider eligibility for school lunches that are free or offered at reduced prices.
- Cut down on meals away from home.
- Consider packing lunches for family member to take to work and school.
- Take advantage of coupons, discounts and "specials" when eating out.

Adapted with assistance of Julie Albrecht, Extension Food and Nutrition Specialist from material produced by the United States Department of Agriculture and the Cooperative Extension Service in the states of Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, and Nebraska, March 1991.

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