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## NF91-25 Cutting Family Living Clothing and Personal Care Expenses

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## Cutting Family Living Clothing and Personal Care Expenses

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*Kathy Prochaska-Cue, Extension Family Economics and Management Specialist*

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### **Clothing**

- Buy only because you need the clothing and buy only those items that will fit into your present wardrobe. (If you are choosing between two outfits, buy the one that goes best with shoes you have.)
- Buy usable clothing from thrift shops, garage sales, warehouse outlets, discount centers, yard sales.
- Make purchases during sales time: clearance, end-of-month, or end-of-season.
- Buy versatile clothes that will expand your wardrobe, i.e., a sweater you can wear with two pairs of slacks you already have.
- Instead of buying new clothes, buy accessories that give a new look to the clothes already in your closet.
- Buy multi-season clothes, i.e., knits that can be worn more than one season; an all-weather coat with a zip-in lining.
- Buy minimum care clothing: washable, dark colors. Dark clothes usually show wear less than light colors — especially coats, slacks, etc. Always check the "care" label before purchasing an item.
- Use self-dry-cleaning services. Dry clean your own clothes. Share a load with a friend if you don't have enough for a full load.
- If you know how to make clothes, consider saving by sewing your own, but estimate costs

carefully. You may be able to buy certain items on sale for less than you would spend on fabric and supplies.

- Keep clothes clean and in good repair. Remove stains promptly.
- Store clothes properly to protect from sun, moths, mildew, stretching, etc.
- Protect shoes, leather items from water and salt stains.
- Consider care costs before purchase.
- Find new ways to use old clothes. Remodel or recycle an outfit you already own.
- Wear "work" clothes for dirty jobs.
- Use cloth baby diapers and launder them yourself.
- Share or trade sewing skills with family members, others in the community.
- Swap outgrown children's clothes, maternity clothes with neighbors.
- Do the same with shoes, ice skates, sports equipment, baby accessories.
- Share clothes if two can agree on care.

## **Personal Care**

- Use a mixture of baking soda and salt for brushing teeth.
- Buy personal care items from discount stores.
- Buy necessary items such as shampoo and toothpaste at reduced prices when stores offer "specials".
- Compare generic, store and national brands — you may be paying for advertising.
- Give haircuts and permanents at home. Adopt hair styles you can manage yourself.
- Try inexpensive cosmetics. Similar ingredients are used in like cosmetic products. The difference in price is often due to promotion or advertising.

Adapted with assistance from Rose Marie Tondl, Extension Clothing and Textiles 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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