

Whole Grain Products

Look for the phrase “whole grain” on the label and in the ingredient list. Many foods containing whole grains will have the words “whole grain” followed by the name of the grain as one of the first ingredients. Products labelled with the words “multigrain,” and “organic” are not necessarily whole grain.

Breads

Save by buying...

- bread that is reduced in price but is not past the ‘best before’ date. Freeze it right away and it will last up to 6 months frozen. Keep bread in the freezer. Storing bread in the fridge can delay mold, but quickly stales it.

Breakfast Cereals

Save by buying...

- plain hot cereals made with 100% whole grains.
- add your own fruit and nuts to plain, whole grain cereals such as wheat biscuits or rolled oats. Pre-sweetened varieties and those with added fruit and nuts cost more.



Beverages

- Juice (including 100% juice), fruit cocktails and drinks, chocolate milk, sweetened plant-based beverages, pop and sports drinks are all high in sugar. Sugary drinks are tied to a higher risk of dental decay in children.
- Save by making water your drink of choice.

Pasta, Rice & Grains

Save by buying...

- plain brown rice, whole grain pasta and other whole grains. Store in well-sealed containers in a dry place. Add your own vegetables and seasonings for flavour.
- bulgur, quinoa, buckwheat, millet and barley for variety and fibre.

More Expensive Items

Save by buying less of...

- the more processed products like specialty breads, crackers, pre-seasoned noodles and rice mixes that are more expensive and less likely to be “whole grain”.
- bakery products like donuts, muffins and croissants that can be expensive and higher in saturated fat and sugar.

Tips:

- To choose the healthiest cereals pick ones made with whole grains that have at least 4 grams of fibre and 8 grams or less of sugar per 30 gram serving.
- Use bread that has lost its freshness for homemade croutons or bread crumbs.

BEST BUYS

Stretch your food dollar and build a healthier plate by using our tips. Start with half a plate filled with vegetables and fruit. Then fill a quarter of the plate with whole grains. Add protein foods to the remaining quarter. Make water your drink of choice.

Vegetables and Fruit

Fill half your plate with vegetables and fruit.

Fresh

Save by buying...

- fresh vegetables and fruit in season.
- small amounts to avoid waste if they ripen quickly. Reduce food waste even more by only cutting up what you plan to eat within the next day.
- root vegetables like potatoes, carrots, parsnips, turnips, sweet potatoes and onions.
- produce from the ‘reduced’ section for better value - but beware as this produce needs to be used up quickly.
- apples, oranges, and potatoes in pre-packaged bags rather than individually. Try different recipes to use them before they spoil.

Tips:

- Go to the Food and Nutrition section at www.canada.ca/en/services/health/food-nutrition.html to learn about safe food storage.
- Add leftover cooked vegetables to soups, stews or stir-fries.
- Compare the price of canned products using unit pricing on the shelf sticker to find the best buy.
- Use the Nutrition Facts table to compare products.
- Wash and cut your own produce because ready-to-eat versions cost more.



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Frozen and Canned

Save by buying...

- frozen vegetables that often cost less than fresh in the winter. Use them in casseroles, soups, chili or main dishes. Choose those without added sugars, seasonings, breading or rich sauces.
- peas, corn, green beans, mixed vegetables and spinach for the best buys in frozen products.
- store brand frozen products or lower priced brand name products.
- fresh, frozen or canned fruit to use as a tasty alternative to a costly dessert.
- canned fruit and vegetables without added salt (sodium) or sugar.

Tips for Kids:

- Don't be fooled by the colourful pictures when buying snacks for kids. Dried fruit leathers/roll-ups are high in sugar and can easily increase the risk of getting cavities. If you serve dried fruit, serve it with meals.
- Remember, children don't need juice to be healthy. Whole vegetables and fruit have more nutrients, like fibre, and less sugar.

For more information, call a Registered Dietitian at 1-800-660-5853 or visit our website www.healthunit.org

Adapted from: *The Shopper's Guide to Making Healthy Food Choices* available from the *Choosing Healthy Food* Section at www.healthunit.org



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Protein Foods

Best buys in protein foods include legumes and pulses, fortified soy beverages and tofu, nuts and seeds, eggs, fish and shellfish, lean poultry and lean cuts of beef, pork and wild game. Also included in protein foods are dairy products such as lower fat milk, lower fat yogurts, lower fat kefir, and cheeses lower in fat and sodium.

Plant-based Protein Foods

Save by buying...

- legumes (peas, beans, and lentils) in dry form. Canned legumes are also inexpensive and can save you time. Puree beans or chickpeas to use in dips and spreads like hummus.
- tofu - use it in place of half the ground beef in meatloaf, chili or tacos. Use it in stir-frys.
- nuts and seeds in small amounts

Eggs

Save by buying...

- eggs - not just for breakfast! Boil them for part of a quick snack.

Fish

Save by buying...

- unflavoured canned 'light' tuna (rather than Albacore or "white" canned tuna), salmon and sardines packed in water. They are economical and nutritious. Compare brands for your best buy.
- plain frozen fish. Fish sticks and battered fish fillets are more expensive and higher in fat.



Tips:

- Make your own trail mix by combining your favourite whole grain cereal with a handful of nuts and seeds.
- Legumes are low in fat and high in fibre. Choose canned legumes without added salt and rinse well before using. Add them to soups, pasta sauces, chili and salads, stews, casseroles, burritos and tacos. Spread hummus on the inside of a whole grain pita and fill with vegetables such as romaine lettuce and shredded carrots.
- Choose dry roasted nuts and seeds without added sugar and salt.
- Choose peanut butter or other nut butters that list peanuts or nuts as the only ingredient.
- Choose fish high in healthy omega-3 fats like salmon, herring, mackerel, sardines, rainbow trout, char, white fish, and smelt.
- The bones in canned fish can be eaten and are a good source of calcium.
- Buy poultry with skin on and bone-in as it is less expensive. Remove the skin before serving as it is high in fat. Boil the bones to make soup stock.
- Meat in bulk packages or family size may be cheaper, but check the price per kilogram (or kg) to compare different packages.

Poultry

Save by buying...

- whole chickens and cut them into serving size pieces yourself.
- poultry pieces that you cook up before freezing. This will reduce food waste by helping you plan for quick meals.
- unprocessed products. Pre-basted, pre-seasoned and pre-marinated cost more and are higher in fat and salt.

Cuts of Meat

Save by buying...

- a slow-cooker in order to cook and enjoy more economical cuts like pot roasts, stewing beef and meat from blade, cross rib and shoulder cuts.
- lean ground turkey, chicken or beef on sale. Cook it up with onions, garlic and other minced vegetables. Freeze it in smaller portions and put a date on it. This can reduce food waste. Use it for pasta sauces, chili, taco mix, shepherd's pie and more.

Tips for Kids:

- Offer a variety of protein foods at a young age.
- Check out homemade baked goods that use beans like black bean mini muffins.
- Avoid cocoa hazelnut spreads and flavoured peanut butters with added sugars, honey or jams.
- Limit prepared 'lunch kits' that are high in salt, sugar and fat. Instead, make your own using protein foods, fruit, vegetables, lower fat milk and alternative products and whole grains.
- Pepperoni sticks, hot dogs, sausages, ham, corned beef, beef jerky are examples of processed meat. Limit these choices as they are high in salt and saturated fat.

More Protein Foods

Milk

Save by buying...

- milk in bags rather than cartons. You can freeze milk in bags for up to 6 weeks. Thaw in the fridge.
- dry milk powder. Follow the directions and use it in recipes that call for milk.

Cheese

Save by buying...

- store brand or store-wrapped cheese.
- mild and medium cheese. They are cheaper than old cheese.
- larger bricks of cheese to slice or grate yourself.



Tips:

- Choose lower-fat milk products more often.
- Use lower-fat milk or evaporated milk instead of cream to make recipes more nutritious, lower in fat, and less expensive.
- Add dry milk powder to pasta dishes, soups and stews to increase calcium, vitamin D and protein.
- Buy blocks of cheese when on sale and freeze. Thawed cheese will crumble, but it is just as nutritious.
- To cut down on the amount of added fat in recipes, use lower fat yogurt instead of sour cream.

Yogurt

Save by buying...

- tubs of yogurt instead of multi-packs or smaller containers.
- store brands.
- plain or greek yogurt (which is higher in protein) then add your own fruit and nuts.

Other Sources of Calcium

For variety try...

- fortified soy beverage that has vitamins and minerals equal to those in cow's milk; look for "unsweetened" varieties to cut back on added sugar.

Important note:

Soy and other plant-based beverages are not suitable for children under two years old.

Tips For Kids:

- Breastfeeding is recommended up to two years and beyond.
- Children under two years need 3.25% MF (homogenized) milk. School-age children can choose lower-fat options (2% MF or less).
- Choose plain white milk most often; flavoured options (e.g., chocolate) are high in added sugar.

Food Safety Tip

- Check the "best before" date on all dairy products.

Saving Tips

- Check weekly flyers to find the best deals.
- When staple items are on sale, it's a good idea to stock up.
- Shop store brands.