



Strengthening Oklahoma Families

Eating healthy and reducing food waste

Interest rates, utility bills and food prices have skyrocketed lately, making it more difficult for consumers to make ends meet. With grocery prices at an all-time high, it's more important now than ever to make wise choices at the supermarket in order to put healthy meals on the table, stay within budget and reduce food waste. Household food waste represents about 44% of all food waste generated in the United States.

One of the best ways to stay on a budget is to plan meals, said Janice Hermann, Oklahoma State University Extension nutrition education specialist.

"Planning your meals in advance and buying only what is needed for those meals will help reduce your grocery bill. Plus, a meal plan can help incorporate leftovers, which reduces food waste," Hermann said. "Sunday's roast can become Tuesday's beef stew. A roasted chicken can be turned into other meals such as chicken salad or a chicken potpie. Wasting food is simply throwing money away."

As you make a meal plan, look through the refrigerator, freezer and pantry to see what's already on hand and plan around those ingredients. Be sure to include breakfast, lunch, dinner and



snacks. Visit the USDA's MyPlate Kitchen for recipe ideas. Check out sales flyers and plan meals around things that are on sale. If your budget allows, stock up on shelf-stable items or things that can easily be frozen.

"When making your grocery list, be sure to include things such as fruits, vegetables and milk that may not be part of a recipe but are basics for healthy eating," she said. "Meat prices are higher, so in order to save money consider planning some meals with less expensive alternative proteins such as beans, peas and lentils. Try to make half of your meal from fruits and vegetables, then fill in the rest with healthy proteins, dairy and whole grains."

It's important to make and stick to a shopping list. Organize the list into different sections of the store to avoid backtracking through the aisles. Because stores place the priciest items at eye level, look at the upper and lower shelves for [\(continued on page 2\)](#)

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Extend Your Financial Resources, source: KSU Extension

When paying the monthly bills, it may feel like the paycheck just doesn't go as far as it once did, and this is especially true in a time of price increases, said Elizabeth Kiss, K-State Research and Extension specialist in personal finance planning.

With some of the recent price increases, it can feel as if your income is dropping even though your paycheck remains the same. It is important for people to realize that this is happening for reasons that are out of their control. To combat that, it is important to take stock of the family's resources. This is a time to look at our values and set some priorities for our spending for the rest of the year.

One strategy is to consider substituting goods and services. Buying things when they are on special or using coupons are ways to help reduce the costs.

Transportation is a large expense for many people, and one that should be considered when budgeting. Ways to reduce the expense include carpooling or opting to walk/ride a bike if it can be done safely. It is also important to keep up on car maintenance to avoid costly repairs.

Another small adjustment people can make to extend their financial resources is to minimize food waste. If you don't like leftovers and end up throwing them out, that is like putting money in the trash. Instead, try cooking smaller portions or freeze the excess food for a future meal.

If money is still very tight, picking up a second job may give you a chance to bring in more money right now. Just make sure that you are actually making money. If taking on a second job is costing a lot in childcare or transportation, it might not be financially worth it.

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better bargains.

Hermann suggested reading the Nutrition Facts label to help guide consumers in purchasing healthy foods. Look for reduced fat or low-fat on the label.

"Compare labels on similar foods to see which one better fits a healthy eating plan," she said. "Keep in mind fresh, frozen and canned fruits and vegetables are healthy options. Seasonal produce will cost less and be at its peak flavor but buy only what you can use before it spoils."

Check out this SNAP-Ed seasonal produce guide to

help explore different fruit and vegetable options throughout the year. In addition, if the local supermarket doesn't offer a large selection, consider other purchasing options such as farmers markets for the freshest produce.

"Drink water instead of soda and other sugary beverages. Tap water is easy on your wallet and has zero calories," Hermann said. "A reusable water bottle is a great way to take water on the go and avoid the high cost of bottled water from a convenience store."

Another great tool to help ensure consumers use food while

at peak quality and reduce waste is the USDA FoodKeeper app available for most smart devices. Consumers often throw food away because they're not sure of its quality or safety. This app serves as a guideline to help consumers better understand food and beverage storage. It also provides safe food handling and preparation information.

USDA's MyPlate website has a helpful section called Healthy Eating on a Budget. Check it out for ideas to keep your food budget in check all while providing healthy food choices for the family.

National Nutrition Month: Fuel for the Future

No matter your age or activity level, making healthful food and drink choices will provide your body with energy now and fuel for the future. Plus, the benefits of eating healthfully can add up over time.

Eat with the environment in mind:

Buying foods in season and shopping locally, when possible, not only benefits the planet, but it also may help you keep food costs down.

Enjoying more plant-based meals and snacks is another option. Try more meatless meals or substituting some or all of the meat in recipes with plant-based proteins.

See a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN):

Good nutrition can positively influence our health, and there are many ways to eat healthfully. Plus, no single food or food group provides all the nutrients we need for good health.

It's important to learn what choices work best for you so that a healthy eating routine becomes a way of life. Ask your doctor for a referral to an RDN and find an RDN who specializes in your unique needs.

Stay nourished and save money:

When prices of food and other goods go up, buying healthful foods may not feel like a priority. Yet, many healthful foods are filling, cost less overall and help to manage or reduce your chances of developing certain chronic diseases.

A little planning before you shop can go a long way in choosing foods that are affordable, satisfying and have a higher amount of nutrition.

Eat a variety of foods from all food groups:

Fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods and dairy all play a role in fueling our bodies. Choosing a variety of healthful foods is important, since foods can differ in the nutrients they provide. Follow MyPlate's Daily Recommendations for each food group to get the nutrients you need at each life stage. Eat foods in various forms including fresh, frozen, canned and dried.

Make tasty foods at home:

To increase variety in your eating routine, try new flavors and foods from around the world. Another way to eat healthier and save money is to learn cooking and meal preparation skills. This can help you find creative ways to use leftovers rather than tossing them.

Putting it all together:

Finding ways to include the foods you enjoy while getting the nutrients you need is important at any age. The foods and drinks we choose can be influenced by a variety of things, such as taste, cost, culture, convenience and cooking skills.

For help in reaching your health goals, consult a registered dietitian nutritionist. RDNs are the nutrition experts and can provide individualized nutrition advice to help you Fuel for the Future.

Bowtie and Spinach Salad

- Ingredients:

- 2 cups uncooked multigrain bow tie pasta
- 1 can (15 ounces) garbanzo beans or chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 6 cups fresh baby spinach (about 6 ounces)
- 2 cups fresh broccoli florets
- 2 plum tomatoes, chopped
- 1 medium sweet red pepper, chopped
- 1/2 cup cubed part-skim mozzarella cheese
- 1/2 cup pitted Greek olives, halved 1/4 cup minced fresh basil
- 1/3 cup reduced-fat, sun-dried tomato salad dressing
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup chopped walnuts, toasted

Instructions:

1. Cook pasta according to the package directions. Drain; transfer to a large bowl.
2. Add beans, vegetables, cheese, olives and basil to pasta. Drizzle with dressing and sprinkle with salt; toss to coat. Sprinkle with walnuts.

Nutrition Facts: Serving size: 2 cups. Amount per serving: Calories: 318; Total fat: 13g; Saturated fat: 2g; Cholesterol: 7mg; Sodium: 661mg; Carbohydrates: 39g; Fiber: 7g; Sugar: 6g; Protein: 13g

For more on this recipe, visit tasteofhome.com



Historical Origins of Food Preservation, source: NCHFP, Bryan Numer

The astonishing fact about food preservation is that it permeated every culture at nearly every moment in time. To survive ancient man had to harness nature. In frozen climates he froze seal meat on the ice. In tropical climates he dried foods in the sun.

Food by its nature begins to spoil the moment it is harvested. Food preservation enabled ancient man to make roots and live in one place and form a community. He no longer had to consume the kill or harvest immediately, but could preserve some for later use. Each culture preserved their local food sources using the same basic methods of food preservation.

In ancient times the sun and wind would have naturally dried foods. Evidence shows that Middle East and oriental cultures actively dried foods as early as 12,000 B.C. in the hot sun. Later cultures left more evidence and each would have methods and materials to reflect their food supplies—fish, wild game, domestic animals, etc.

Vegetables and fruits were also dried from the earliest times. The Romans were particularly fond of any dried fruit they could make. In the Middle Ages purposely built “still houses” were created to dry fruits, vegetables and herbs in areas that did not have enough strong sunlight for drying. A fire was used to create the heat needed to dry foods and in some cases smoking them as well.

Freezing was an obvious preservation method to the appropriate climates. Any geographic area that had freezing temperatures for even part of a year made use of the temperature to preserve foods. Less than freezing temperatures were used to prolong storage times. Cellars, caves and cool streams were put to good use for that purpose.

In America estates had icehouses built to store ice and food on ice. Soon the “icehouse” became an “icebox”. In the 1800’s mechanical refrigeration was invented and was quickly put to use. Also in the late 1800’s Clarence Birdseye discovered that quick freezing at very low temperatures made for better tasting meats and vegetables. After some time he perfected his “quick freeze” process and revolutionized this method of food preservation.

Canning is the process in which foods are placed in jars or cans and heated to a temperature that destroys microorganisms and inactivates enzymes. This heating and later cooling forms a vacuum seal. The vacuum seal prevents other microorganisms from recontaminating the food within the jar or can.

Canning is the newest of the food preservations methods being pioneered in the 1790s when a French confectioner, Nicolas Appert, discovered that the application of heat to food in sealed glass bottles preserved the food from deterioration. He theorized “if it works for wine, why not foods?” In about 1806 Appert’s principles were successfully trialed by the French Navy on a wide range of foods including meat, vegetables, fruit and even milk. Based on Appert’s methods Englishman, Peter Durand, used tin cans in 1810.

Appert had found a new and successful method to preserve foods, but he did not fully understand it. It was thought that the exclusion of air was responsible for the preservations. It was not until 1864 when Louis Pasteur discovered the relationship between microorganisms and food spoilage/illness did it become clearer. Just prior to Pasteur’s discovery Raymond Chevalier-Appert patented the pressure retort (canner) in 1851 to can at temperatures higher than 212°F. However, not until the 1920’s was the significance of this method known in relation to *Clostridium botulinum*.

OHCE NEWS

Agra HCE made and delivered 14 fuzzy, heart- shaped pillows and Valentine’s cards to residents at Chandler Living Center. They are also planning to deliver Easter Baskets to adopted residents in April.

Upcoming Events:

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| March 16 | Executive Meeting @ 9:30, County Officers and Local Presidents |
| March 16 | Leader Lesson @ 10:30: Caring About Composting |
| March 28 | NE District OHCE, Tulsa Tech, Owasso |
| April 6 | Spring County Meeting @ 10:30, Chandler FUMC,
Captain Creek hosting |
| April 7 | Good Friday, Extension Office closed |
| April 20 | Leader Lesson: District Leader lesson: TBA |



Family & Consumer Sciences helps communities, families, youth and individuals address issues of health, wealth and well-being through research-based Extension education and programs that are proven to work.



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