**SLIDE 1: Eating Healthy with Rising Food Prices: Script**

**SLIDE 2:**

Interest rates, utility bills and food prices have risen lately, making it more difficult for consumers to make ends meet. With grocery prices being high, it’s more important now than ever to use wise strategies before, during and after grocery shopping in order to put healthy meals on the table, stay within budget and reduce food waste.

**SLIDE 3:**

**Build a Healthy Eating Style**

A healthy eating style can help you be healthier now, and in the future, which in the long run can save you even more money. Use MyPlate as a guide for eating healthy. The MyPlate messages are small changes that can help you create a healthier eating style:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [MyPlate Logo](https://www.choosemyplate.gov/find-your-healthy-eating-style-and-maintain-it-lifetime) | * **Find your healthy eating style and maintain it for a lifetime**   + A healthy eating style means regularly eating a variety of foods from each of the MyPlate food groups to get the nutrients and calories you need. |
| [Fruit](https://www.choosemyplate.gov/focus-fruits) | * **Make half your plate fruits and vegetables: Focus on whole fruits**   + A healthy eating style includes fruits, especially whole fruits. |
| [Vegetables](https://www.choosemyplate.gov/vary-your-veggies-0) | * **Make half your plate veggies and fruits: Vary your veggies** * A healthy eating style includes vegetables from all five vegetable subgroups- dark-green vegetables; red and orange vegetables; beans, peas and lentils; starchy vegetables, and other vegetables. |
| [Grains](https://www.choosemyplate.gov/make-half-your-grains-whole-grains) | * **Make half your grains whole grains**   + A healthy eating style includes grains, with at least half coming from whole grains. |
| [Dairy](https://www.choosemyplate.gov/move-low-fat-or-fat-free-milk-or-yogurt) | * **Move to low-fat or fat-free milk or yogurt**   + healthy eating style includes fat-free and low-fat (1%) dairy. |
| [Protein Foods](https://www.choosemyplate.gov/vary-your-protein-routine) | * **Vary your protein routine**   + A healthy eating style includes a variety of protein foods including meats, poultry, eggs, seafood, nuts, seeds and soy products. |
| MyPlate Limits button | * **Drink and eat beverages and foods with less saturated fat, sodium, and added sugar**   + A healthy eating style has less saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars. |
| [MyPlate, MyWins logo](https://www.choosemyplate.gov/make-small-changes-0) | * **Make small changes**   + Make small changes and take healthy eating one-step at a time. Find what works within you/your family’s food preferences, health goals and budget. |

**SLIDE 4:**

**Before You Shop**

**Plan meals and snacks:** Planning your meals and snacks before you go to the grocery store can help you buy only the items you need and put leftovers to good use. The following are some meal planning tips:

* **Write down recipes to try.**
  + Find new ideas for healthy and budget-friendly meals based on what you have on hand, foods your family enjoys, and foods that are good buys. Visit MyPlate Kitchen for recipe ideas <https://www.myplate.gov/myplate-kitchen>
* **See what you already have.**
  + Look in your freezer, cabinets, and refrigerator and make note of what you currently have on hand.
  + You can save money by using these items in upcoming meals.
* **Think about your time.**
  + Choose meals you can easily prepare when you do not have a lot of time and save recipes that take longer for days.
  + Make larger meals with enough servings for another meal. On busy days, just heat and serve.
* **Look at flyers, curriculars and online for sales, store specials and coupons.**
  + Sales flyers can be found at the store entrance, newspaper or website.
  + Only use coupons on foods you normally eat.
  + Make sure the coupons give you the best value for your money.
* **Plan to use leftovers.**
  + Think about how you would use leftovers:
    - Roast → soup, stew, fajitas, stir-fry
    - Roasted chicken → soups, casseroles, chicken salad, stir-fry
    - Ham → sandwiches, soups, ham salad, casseroles
    - Fruit →smoothies
    - Vegetables → soups

**SLIDE 5:**

**Make a grocery list:** Making a grocery list also helps you avoid buying items you do not really need. The less time you are in the store the less you are likely to spend. The following are some grocery list tips:

* **Build your grocery list as you go.**
  + Keep a list of food you need as you run out.
* **Use your plan of meals and snacks.**
  + Create a list of foods and beverages you will need to buy to make the meals and snacks planned,
* **Organize your grocery list.**
* Make shopping quick and easy by organizing your list into different sections or food groups.

**SLIDE 6:**

**While You Shop**

The following are some grocery shopping tips to help you make decisions about what to put in your cart.

* **Don’t go to the store hungry.**
  + It is easier to stick to your shopping list when you are not hungry.
  + Grocery shopping hungry can lead to impulse buying and unhealthy food choices.
* **Look up and down for savings.**
  + Stores often stock the priciest items at eye level. Make sure you look at the upper and lower shelves too.
* **Try store brands.**
  + Most stores offer their own produce brand that often cost less than name brands.
* **Compare similar products using unit prices for the best deal.**
  + **Unit Price** – the price of an item per pound, ounce, etc.
    - **Compare foods using unit prices to get the best price per pound, ounce, etc.**
    - However, if the best price is a larger size, it is only a good deal if you will use the larger size.
* **Check “sell by” or “use by” dates.**
  + **Buy the freshest foods possible.**
* **Grab from the back.**
  + Stores typically place the newest items behind the older ones. Reach in the back for the freshest items especially in the produce, dairy, and meat aisles.
* **Use the Nutrition Facts label.**
  + Food labels tell you the nutritional content of a food.
  + You can compare foods using the Nutrition Facts label to choose the healthier option.

**SLIDE 7:**

* **Remember you often pay for convenience.**
  + Chicken breasts versus the whole chicken.
  + Pre-cut fruit versus whole fruit.
  + Instant rice versus regular.
* **Buy a mix of fresh, frozen, and shelf-stable items.**
  + Plan for a mix of fresh, frozen, and shelf-stable (or non-perishable) foods for your meals.
* **Be “Food Safe”.**
  + Shop refrigerated or frozen foods just before checking out.
  + Transport perishable food in cooler or thermal bag.
* **Ask for a rain check.**
  + If a sale item has run out, ask the store for a rain check. This allows you to pay the sale price after the item is restocked.
* **Join store’s loyalty program.**
  + Store loyalty programs may provide special offers, coupons and discounts.
* **Think outside the store.**
  + Farmers markets and farm stands may be great options for picking up fresh produce at a discount.

**SLIDE 8:**

**Food Group budget-friendly and healthy options:**

* **Fruits & Vegetables**
  + **Buy “in season” produce**
    - “In season” produce often costs less and is at peak flavor. Buy only what you can use before it spoils.
    - Check out the Seasonal Produce Guide <https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/seasonal-produce-guide> from SNAP-Ed Connection.
  + **Try buying canned.**
    - Canned fruits and vegetables are available all year, last much longer than fresh, often cost less and are have similar nutritional values to fresh.
    - Choose fruit canned in 100% fruit juice and vegetables with “low-sodium” or “no salt added” on the label.
  + **If you have the freezer space, buy frozen.**
    - Frozen fruits and vegetables are available all year, last much longer than fresh, may cost less and are have similar nutritional values to fresh.
    - Buy large bags of frozen vegetables.
    - Choose frozen fruit without added sugar, and frozen vegetables without added sauces or butter.
* **Grains**
  + Look for bargains on day-old varieties.
  + Rice and pasta are budget-friendly grain options.
  + Buy regular rice and hot cereals over instant.
  + Make half your grains whole grains.
    - Check the ingredient lists and choose grains that have a whole grain listed first.
    - Try new whole grain snack ideas, like switching to whole-wheat crackers or popping your own popcorn.

**SLIDE 9:**

* **Protein Foods**
  + **Beans, peas and lentils are low-cost choices.**
    - Beans, peas, and lentils cost peas cost less than a similar amount of other protein foods and have long shelf-life.
    - Use these good sources of protein for main or side dishes and an excellent source of fiber.
  + **Buy lower cost meats**
    - Chicken and pork may be less expensive.
    - Some cuts of beef may be less expensive, but need a longer time and a lower temperature.
    - Usually eggs are a low-cost option that is easy to prepare.
  + **To lower meat costs, buy the family-sized or value packs and freeze what you do not use.**
    - Choose lean meats like chicken or turkey.
    - When choosing ground beef, make sure it is lean (at least 93% lean) ground beef.
  + **Seafood does not have to be expensive.**
    - Try buying canned tuna and salmon – they store well and are a low-cost option.
  + **Extend meat.**
    - Because meat is often the highest dollar ingredient in a recipe, consider extending meat with beans (chili) or vegetables or in casseroles.
* **Dairy**
  + **Buy low-fat or fat-free milk, yogurt, and cheese in the largest size that can be used before spoiling.** 
    - Large containers cost less per serving than smaller sizes.
    - Buy large yogurt containers and add your own fruit.
  + **Check the sell by date to make sure you are buying the freshest dairy products.**
  + **Choose low- fat or fat-free milk.**
    - They provide just as much calcium, but fewer calories than whole and 2% milk.
  + **Choose cheese products with "reduced fat" or "low-fat" on the label.**

**SLIDE 10:**

* **Other**
  + **Drink water instead of buying sodas or other sugary drinks.**
    - Tap water is easy on your wallet and has zero calories. A reusable water bottle is a great way to have water with you on the go.
  + **Save money and calories by skipping the chip, cookie, and snack aisles.**
  + **Choose checkout lanes without the candy, especially if you have kids with you.**

**SLIDE 11:**

**After You Shop**

* **Keep food safe.**
  + Refrigerate or freeze perishable food within two hours of shopping, and within one hour in hot weather (90°F or above).
  + **Check refrigerator and freezer temperatures**
    - Refrigerator: ≤ 40°F
    - Freezer: ≤ 0°F
  + If you buy a large amount of fresh food, like meat, poultry, or fish, divide it into meal-size packages, label the food, and freeze it for later use.
  + The National Center for Home Food Preservation has information on how to freezing different foods at <https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/freeze.html>
* **Watch portion sizes.**
  + Watching portion sizes can not only help you save money it can help reduce food waste.
* **Reduce food waste.**
  + Reducing food waste can help save money and protect natural resources and the environment.
  + USDA estimates 30 to 40 percent of the food supply is lost or wasted at the retail and consumer levels.
* **Storage reminders.**
  + Follow food storage times. The USDA FoodKeeper Application <https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe/foodkeeper-app> provides pantry, refrigerator and freezer storage times for different foods.
* **Be Organized.**
  + Use foods with the earliest expiration dates first. Foods are less likely to go bad when you use the older items first.
  + Keep your pantry and refrigerator clean and organized so you can see what needs to be eaten first.
* **Re-purpose.**
  + Give leftovers a makeover when you reuse them in recipes.
    - Add broccoli stems to a salad.
    - Bled overripe fruit into a low-fat smoothie.
* **Compost.**
  + Instead of throwing out food, create a compost bin.

**SLIDE 12:**

* **Understand food product dates**
  + **Types of food product dating?**
    - **“Open Dating”** is a calendar dates applied by the manufacturer that helps stores determine now long to display a product and provides consumers information on when the product will be of best quality.
    - **“Closed Dating”** is a code that consists of a series of letters and/or numbers applied by manufacturers to identify the date and time of production.
  + **Does federal law require food product dating?**
    - Except for infant formula, dates are not an indicator of the products’ safety and are not required by Federal regulation.
  + **Are dates for food safety for food quality?**
    - Except for infant formula, dates are not an indicator of the product’s safety. Manufacturers provide dating to help consumers and retails decide when food is of best quality.
  + **What types of foods are dated?**
    - Open dating is found on most foods including meat, poultry, egg and dairy products. "Closed or coded dates" are a series of letters and/or numbers and typically appear on shelf-stable products such as cans and boxes of food.
  + **What date-labeling phrases are used?**
    - There is no uniform or universally accepted descriptions used on food labels for open dating in the United States. As a result, there is a wide variety of phrases used on labels to describe quality dates. Examples of commonly used:
    - **“Best if Used By (or Before)”** date indicates when a product will be of best flavor and quality. It is not a purchase or safety date.
    - **“Sell-By”** date tell the store how long to display the product for sale for inventory management. It is not a safety date.
    - **“Use-By”** date is the last date recommended to use the product while at peak quality. ***It is not a safety date, except for infant formula. Do not buy or use baby formula after its “Use-By” date.***
    - **“Freeze-By”** date indicates when a product should be frozen to maintain peak quality. It is not a purchase or safety date.
  + **Date-labeling phase recommended by Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)** 
    - One source of food waste arises from consumers or retailers throwing away wholesome food because of confusion about the meaning of dates displayed on the label. To reduce confusion and wasted food, the FSIS recommends manufacturers and retailers that apply product dating use a “Best if Used by” date. Research shows this phrase conveys to consumers that the produce will be of best quality if used by the date shown.
  + **Are foods safe to eat after the date passes?**
    - With the exception of infant formula, if the date passes during home storage, a product should still be safe if handled properly until the time spoilage is evident.

**SLIDE 13**

**Food Assistance Programs**

* See if you are eligible for food assistance programs:
  + Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
  + Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
  + School Nutrition Programs
  + The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
  + Food pantries
  + Community meals

**SLIDE 14:**

Summary: Even though grocery prices are high, you can put healthy meals on the table.

**References:**

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