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EAT HEALTHY FOR LESS

FIVE TIPS TO PLAN MEALS AND EAT HEALTHY ON A BUDGET

For many people, making time to eat healthy foods might feel like a challenge. With all the demands of daily life—family commitments, doctor visits, late-night activities, and the never-ending to-do list—it's tough to prioritize nutritious meals. When you're busy, it's tempting to opt for quick and cheap options. However, these often lack the essential vitamins and nutrients your body needs for good health. Keep reading for tips on eating healthy without breaking the bank. United Healthcare has five tips to help you plan nourishing meals that are budget friendly.

1. Plan your week

Does lack of planning lead you to a quick Internet search of "food for less near me?" It happens to many

of us. Here's some advice on how to plan your week to match your meal budget and stock your fridge. Decide ahead of time which day of the week you may have to grab a quick bite when you're out and about (and choose a better-for-you restaurant that offers healthier menu options, like salads, steamed veggies or fresh fruit). Prepping for a long commute? Pack the car with healthy snacks (like fruit, nuts or crackers) to avoid stopping at a fast-food joint. Pick a day each week to meal prep cheap, healthy meals for the family. Try simple dishes you can stuff with fruits and veggies, like [overnight breakfast oats](#), [salads](#) for lunch, and a [slow-cooker recipe](#) for dinners.

2. Shop smart

If you're learning how to eat healthy on a budget, you've come to the right place. Small changes in how you shop for food can make a big difference at the bank.

- Find seasonal produce
- Buy in bulk
- Focus on frozen or canned goods

3. Skip processed foods

Not all processed foods are bad for you. In fact, things like bread, hummus, yogurt, and protein bars are all considered processed. Any food that's altered before it gets to our grocery cart is a processed food. That even includes drying or freezing (but frozen strawberries are good for us!). Knowing which processed foods to stay clear of or eat in moderation (things like chips, frozen pizzas, store-bought baked goods) can help you figure out how to eat healthy in a way that works for you and your family.

4. Prepare large portions

Did someone say frozen meals? Making big portions of your favorite healthy dishes can help save you time and money. Plus, they can end up being the cheapest meals for your family. Think of recipes you can make that don't need many ingredients — things like chili, [soup](#), stir fries and stews. Pick a protein, toss in some veggies, and you've got a healthy dinner for cheap that'll last you a while in the freezer.

5. Store leftovers

Using leftovers helps prevent wasting food and money. Be sure to [properly store any food](#) left over from meals in the fridge or freezer and get creative in the kitchen. Potatoes from last night's dinner can be made into a satisfying breakfast burrito, fruit can be mixed and matched for a refreshing smoothie, and the lasagna you made 2 nights ago will freeze nicely until you crave it again.

Through [ThriveOn](#), employees and their enrolled spouses/domestic partners have access to health and wellness coaching. Your WebMD Health and Wellness Coach will work with you to create a personalized wellness program just for you. Your coach will help you focus on what you need to do in order to feel and be your best. Some of the topics you and your coach might discuss include: exercise & nutrition, weight management, stress resiliency, etc.

By making positive changes in these areas of life, you can take concrete steps toward improving your health and overall well-being. Many people find that coaching helps them reduce stress, manage stress better when it happens, lower blood pressure and cholesterol, prevent or keep diabetes in check, lose weight, and simply feel better overall.



UNLOCKING THE PATH TO HOMEOWNERSHIP

NAVIGATING FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS AND RESOURCES

Embarking on the journey of homeownership is a significant financial milestone. Whether you are considering purchasing a home soon or are uncertain about homeownership in your future, understanding the home buying process and its financial commitments is essential for both current and prospective home buyers.

Buying a home represents a major life achievement, embodying the aspirations often linked with the "American Dream." However, navigating through the various stages of this journey, from making an offer to finally holding the keys, can feel overwhelming.

Nonetheless, gaining insights into each step along the way can demystify the process and make it more approachable.

For employees and their enrolled spouses/domestic partners, resources such as Enrich offer personalized courses, webinars, and articles to help understand the financial circumstances surrounding homeownership and beyond. To access all the tools Enrich has to offer log into your [ThriveOn](#) account and click on the Wellness Hub. By completing one of the many courses Enrich offers and taking the Financial Wellness Checkup you can receive \$50 in Well-Being Activity Incentives or [schedule a 1:1 appointment with a Certified Personal Financial Counselor](#) to discuss any questions you have regarding your finances today.

If you are interested in learning more about the home buying process, BMI Federal Credit Union will be hosting a [Home Buying Webinar Thursday, March 28 at 12:00pm](#).

INTRODUCING DOULA COVERAGE

ENHANCED MATERNITY SUPPORT

The Franklin County Cooperative is thrilled to share some exciting news regarding an expansion of our maternity benefits – the introduction of the Doula Reimbursement Program! Doulas offer invaluable support to birthing parents, providing emotional, physical, and informational assistance throughout the childbirth journey.

Here's what you need to know about doula coverage under the plan:

1. Maven Virtual Doulas: Explore the innovative Maven Virtual Doulas service at no cost to you. Engage with a virtual doula by [joining Maven](#).

2. UHC In-Person Doula Coverage: The Doula Reimbursement Program reimburses the cost (up to \$3,000) of in-person and/or telehealth services obtained from any certified doula. The Doula Reimbursement Program allows you the flexibility to choose a doula that aligns with your preferences.

This enhancement to our maternity benefits reflects our commitment to supporting you and your family. Your well-being is our priority, and we want to ensure you have access to the resources and support you

[Learn More](#)

Building a Healthy Eating Routine

National Nutrition Month: *Beyond the Table*

Building a healthy eating routine can look like an 80/20 philosophy. An overall eating pattern that includes both some fun foods, containing high calories and low nutrients, and a majority of nutritious foods means you can conquer cravings by not creating a scarcity mindset, but also ensure you get adequate fiber, vitamins & minerals.

We often believe that a diet we enjoy means it can't be healthy. In reality, discovering how to enjoy a balance of foods leads to an eating pattern that we can sustain over a lifetime to maintain:

- A strong metabolism
- Heart health
- A healthy weight.

For help in finding a routine that works for you, reach out to Maddie Bidwell, RD, LD, for a free, virtual nutrition counseling session.

3 Benefits of a Dietitian

1. Determine fact from fiction

A dietitian can help you navigate the complexities that can come with nutrition education.

2. Setting nutrition goals

A registered dietitian can help you shape your goals into achievable steps and check in with you as you work on them.

3. Preventative health

A dietitian can coach you towards your healthiest lifestyle to reduce the risk of developing conditions later in life.

March Recipe: Vegetarian Taco Salad



Maddie Bidwell, RD, LD
Wellness Consultant
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614-566-0183

Schedule a nutrition counseling session with Maddie by visiting [this link](#).

ATTEND AN UPCOMING WEBINAR

Join us every month for a series of engaging educational webinars brought to you by Franklin County Cooperative and ThriveOn, featuring a diverse range of topics including nutrition, financial support, health-related discussions, and much more from our trusted vendors.



SWACO

Recycle Right at Home

Wednesday, March 27 at 12pm

We understand the confusion that recycling can bring. Fear not! We're here to provide you with the answers you need to feel confident when recycling.

[REGISTER NOW >](#)

EAP Group Sessions

Get the Best of Stress

Wednesday, March 27 from 1-2pm

In this training, participants will learn stress basics and coping strategies for the workplace, including stress hardiness for healthy management. Attendees will also gain tools to reduce stress levels and enhance understanding of personal and organizational stress factors.

[LEARN MORE >](#)

BMI

Home Buying Hosted by BMI Federal Credit Union

Thursday, March 28 at 12pm

Learn how to prepare for purchasing a home and understand the responsibilities that come with home ownership. A mortgage specialist will share tips on how to improve the process, from the dream to closing.

[REGISTER NOW >](#)

UPCOMING WEBINARS

Phone: 614-525-3948

Email: ThriveOn@franklincountyohio.gov

ThriveOn
Your Health and Wellness Program