



Healthy Living With Head Start



Get Ahead with Meal Planning

Food costs are always a large part of family spending. They can also be an easy part of the budget to cut costs in if you plan strategically. Here are some simple ways to help tighten the belt without losing out on healthy choices:

1. **Think ahead** - Getting the most out of each meal is key to saving money. Plan your meals to allow for foods to be cooked ahead or plan the week's meals to best use leftovers.
2. **Stick with the Season** - Buying foods that are in season will help cut the cost of fresh fruits and vegetables. Buying extra when foods are on sale can help stock-pile your freezer for times when the budget comes up a little short.
3. **Plan as a family** - Getting the whole family involved in the meal planning can help get everyone excited about meals to come. You may find that making it a family affair will make the planning a little more fun for you too.
4. **Write it down** - Whether you have an app, a planner, or even just a pad of paper, always put the plan in writing. This will help you organize the schedule and will help you stick to the plan through the week.

Cutting Costs with Healthy Living

Choose Quality, Not Quantity

When it comes to food, it is important to look beyond the amount of a food you can get and look at how many nutrients you can get with each dollar spent.

Processed foods with a lot of calories but not a lot of nutrients are called **energy dense foods**. Many foods like premade meals and fast food come with a smaller price tag, but are not as nutritious as fresh foods. When you buy these foods, you will have to buy more food to meet your family's nutritional needs and may find that some of these foods are not meeting a nutritional need at all.

Less processed fruits, vegetables, meats, and grains have a larger variety of nutrients with fewer empty calories. These foods are called **nutrient dense** foods. Buying fresh, unprocessed foods can help you get ahead if you are willing to put in a little work in the kitchen.



Preventative Care Prevents Emergency Spending



It may be difficult to afford regular visits to your dentist, let alone making a visit that includes emergency treatment. Here are a few ways to minimize emergency spending on oral health:

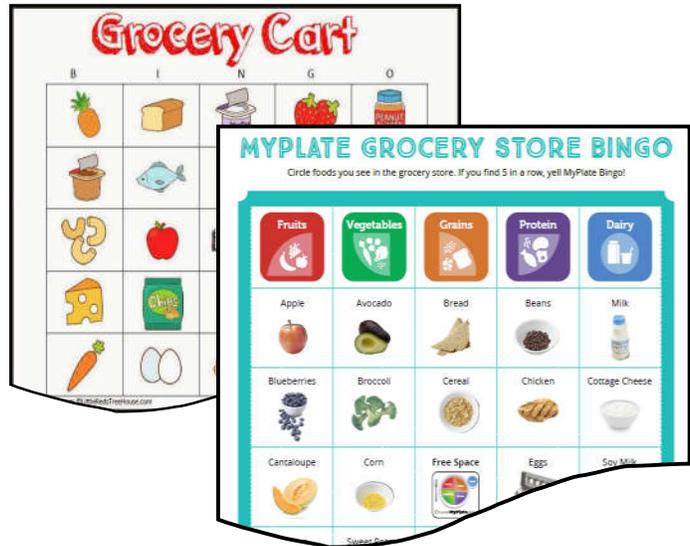
- * **Brush at home** - Brush your teeth 2 or 3 times a day to keep your teeth healthy between professional cleanings. Make sure you help kids under 7 by making sure they have brushed thoroughly every time.
- * **Floss** - Flossing can help your teeth stay cavity free and will also help to keep your gums healthy. Use plastic flossers to make this overlooked task easier.
- * **Snack less** - It takes our mouths one hour to neutralize acids that accumulate during chewing food. Space meals and snacks to allow at least one hour between eating to keep everyone's teeth strong.
- * **Visit your dentist** - Though it may be an extra expense, seeing a dentist regularly is the best way to avoid large, unplanned bills when forced to treat cavities and infections.

Grocery Bingo

This is a fun way to keep everyone moving, searching, and learning while you check everything off your list. Grocery Bingo will help keep everyone moving around the store in search of their next food item while teaching children about new foods.

Materials Needed:

- * Paper or printed Grocery Bingo Card
- * Markers, crayons, colored pencils
- * Stickers or pencils to mark found foods



Directions:

- * Make your own bingo card by drawing a grid with different fruits and vegetables in each square or print a ready-to-use card at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/myplate-grocery-store-bingo>.
- * Before entering the store, provide each child with their own bingo card and stickers to mark off the foods as they locate them.
- * Help younger children recognize foods as you pass them in the aisles by pointing them out and talking about each food as you shop.
- * At the end of the shopping trip, see who was able to get BINGO.

Making Mealtime Memories

Frozen Yogurt Bark

Frozen yogurt bark is an interactive recipe full of protein and fiber to keep everyone active all day. Children can help measure and spread the ingredients making this a great activity to do as a whole family. Try using a variety of fruits to create as many different flavors as you can imagine.

Ingredients

- * 2 cups plain or flavored Greek yogurt
- * 1 cup chopped fruit
- * 1/2 cup granola or cereal
- * 1/2 cup shredded coconut (optional)



Directions

- * Line a baking sheet with wax paper.
- * Spread the yogurt in the prepared baking sheet to an even thickness.
- * Sprinkle chopped fruit and other toppings onto the yogurt.
- * Freeze for 2-3 hours or until firm.
- * Cut into pieces, remove from wax paper, and serve.
- * Return uneaten pieces to the freezer for another day.

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Please contact Amy Losee, Head Start Dental/Nutrition Specialist, with any questions or comments at (607) 433 - 8060

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