

SMART CHOICES

Volume 11 - Winter 2006 Nutrition Connections - A Link to Food, Fitness & Financial Health

A PROGRAM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Which is the Best Buy?

Meat, fish and poultry can be some of the most expensive foods you buy at the supermarket. But, how do you figure out which is the best buy? The experts can easily figure out the best buy because they know how many servings each pound of meat, fish or poultry contain, and use unit pricing to compare the cost per serving. Below are the number of servings per pound for different types of meat:

One pound of meat **without** bones or much visible fat serves **four**. Examples are: ground meat, stew meat, liver, cubed steak, boneless ham, or fish fillets.

One pound of meat with **little** bone or fat serves **three**. Examples are: pork chops, chuck roast, picnic ham, chicken, or bone-in fish.

One pound with **more** bone or fat serves **two**. Examples are: whole chicken, spare ribs, ham hocks, turkey.

To determine the cost per serving, divide the price per pound by the number of servings it will yield.

For example: ground beef at \$2.99/lb. divided by four is 75 cents per serving. Or, chuck roast at \$2.89/lb. divided by three is cost is 96 cents per serving.

But I Can't Afford to Eat Nutritious Foods!

Everyone knows that a healthy diet is associated with reduced risk of chronic diseases and death, particularly from heart disease and cancer.

One reason people may not choose healthy foods over foods that are low in nutrients and high in fat is cost. If you're like most Americans, you think it's more expensive to eat healthy foods like fruits and vegetables.

But is the cost of a healthy diet higher than the standard American diet of convenience foods, snacks, bakery goods, soft drinks, and other less nutritious foods?

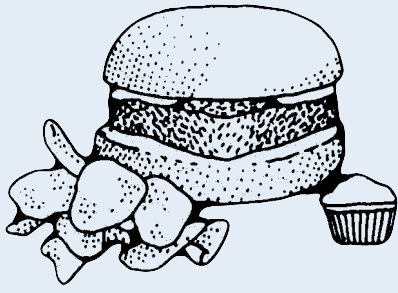
Research reported in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* found that not only was a diet of healthy foods less costly, but it promoted weight loss, too. Overweight children and their parents were encouraged to consume a lot of "nutrient dense" foods like fruits and vegetables (high in nutrients and low in fat and calories) and reduce consumption of "empty-calorie" foods (low in nutrients and high in fat and/or calories). After one year, food costs decreased, and the overweight children and parents were five to eight percent less overweight than at the start of the study!

To see for yourself, go to your local supermarket and compare the costs of the following foods:

Convenience Food	Cost	Healthier Food	Cost
1 lb. bologna	\$ ____	4 cans water-packed tuna	\$ ____
1 box breakfast tarts	\$ ____	1 loaf bread and 1 doz. eggs	\$ ____
1 package frozen pancakes	\$ ____	1 box pancake mix	\$ ____



COMPARE



Take-Out Trends

When families get takeout food, where do they buy them? The most recent *Trends in the United States 2004* survey conducted by the Food Marketing Institute looked at the sources of take-out:

35%
Fast-food restaurant

27%
Supermarket

18%
Full-service restaurant

The use of fast-food restaurants as a main source of take-out meals is more common with households that have three or more people, households with children, and shoppers aged 15-19.

What's Inside Your Cupboards?

Planning to eat better this year? Take a look around your kitchen. You may already have a supply of healthy foods on-hand, making those good intentions easier to follow. A well-stocked kitchen also helps to answer that pesky question, *What's for dinner?* Preparing more meals at home makes it easier to eat more foods for good health and saves money too! Here's a quick guide of some foods to stock up on:

In the cupboard

- canned fruits and vegetables
- canned, bottled, or boxed 100% juices
- tomato products, such as canned tomatoes, sauce, and salsa
- canned soups and broths (check labels for sodium and fat content)
- powdered or evaporated milk (try skim)
- peanut butter, jelly or fruit spreads
- canned or dried beans
- pastas, rice, and other grains such as barley and couscous
- whole grain breads and breakfast cereals, and oatmeal
- dried fruit, nuts, popcorn (low-fat or air popped)
- vegetable oils, vinegars
- baking ingredients
- dried herbs and spices

In the refrigerator

- milk, yogurt, cheese (try low-fat or fat-free products)
- eggs and egg substitutes
- fruit and vegetables (some like potatoes and onions should be stored in a cool, dark place, not the refrigerator)
- lean deli meats, such as turkey or ham
- mustard, ketchup, "light" mayonnaise and other condiments

In the freezer

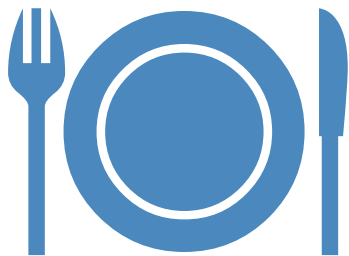
- frozen vegetables, such as spinach, kale, broccoli, and squash
- frozen fruits, such as blueberries and strawberries
- 100% frozen juice concentrate
- lean meats, poultry, and fish
- breads, pizza dough, tortillas, and English muffins (try some whole wheat varieties)



Keeping these foods on-hand will make it easier to put together a quick and healthy meal.

Dear Reader, *Smart Choices* is a periodic newsletter specially designed to give you the information you need to improve your and your family's nutrition without increasing the amount you spend on food. It is published by the New Hampshire Food Stamp Program and the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, Nutrition Connections Program. Our goal is to give you the most up-to-date information about nutrition, money saving shopping tips and food safety. We hope you find it informative, useful and entertaining, and welcome your comments.

Traditional Family Meals



Most families may be eating home-cooked meals three or more times per week, but they don't always sit down together for a family dinner. More than half of American families (54%) don't eat dinner together every day.

Having children in a household complicates a family's schedule and families with children are less likely to have dinner together every day (42%) compared with childless couples (50%). Of those families with children who don't eat dinner together every day, 36% say they are trying to eat together more often.

Even if every member of the family is headed in a different direction, try to share a meal with at least one other family member. The benefits are tremendous. Generally food

choices are more nutritious. Studies have shown that overall intake of grains, dairy, fruits and vegetables are higher, if meals are eaten in the "traditional family style." And, consumption of sugar-dense soft drinks and other nutrient-void foods is decreased.

Hectic schedules mean short-cuts. For working mothers, foods that require less preparation time make life easier. Almost eight out of 10 working mothers say they "almost always" or "sometimes" buy easy-to-prepare food. Busy lifestyles also mean that families are more likely to buy takeout.

Ask Miss Smarty

Q. Recently I saw bread labeled "100% white whole wheat", but I thought whole wheat was brown. What's the story?

A. Great question! White whole wheat (also called whole white wheat) is 100% whole grain just like regular whole wheat. Both types retain the nutritious bran and germ portions normally lost when wheat is milled into ordinary white "enriched" flour.

White whole wheat has a lighter colored bran layer with a milder, sweeter taste. The flour has a softer texture due to fine grinding and yields a light golden bread that tastes and "feels" just like regular white bread. However, it's much richer in fiber and other nutrients.

You'll soon be seeing more white whole wheat products such as frozen waffles, pastas, tortillas, crackers, and even cookies. They're a smart choice if you or your family don't like the taste of regular whole wheat.

On the downside, some white whole-wheat foods cost more than regular whole-wheat foods. Also, be aware that products labeled "made with whole wheat" (whether white or regular) only contain about 25-50% whole grain, unlike those labeled "100% whole wheat."



Got a question for Miss Smarty?

Write to:

Ask Miss Smarty

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This publication was produced in cooperation with the USDA Food and Nutrition Service, the NH Food Stamp Program and UNH Cooperative Extension. University of New Hampshire, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture and NH Counties cooperating.

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Pumpkin Pancakes

Makes 8 Pancakes



What you will need:

- 1 egg
 - 2 tsp. baking powder
 - 2½ Tbsp. brown sugar
 - 1 cup canned pumpkin
 - 1 cup flour
 - ¾ cup milk
 - ¾ tsp. cinnamon
 - ¼ tsp. ground cloves
 - ⅛ tsp. nutmeg
 - ½ cup walnuts (optional)
1. Place all ingredients in a bowl and mix well.
 2. Drop, 1/3 cup at a time, onto a slightly greased pan.
 3. Flip pancakes when bubbles appear and edges look firm.
 4. Top pancakes with nuts and maple syrup.

Nutrition information per pancake:

Calories: 93, Carbohydrates: 16g, Protein: 3g, Fat: 1g, Sodium: 25mg, Vitamin A: 199 IU, Fiber: 1g.

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