Eat Right
Food, Nutrition and Health Tips from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Shop Smart — Get the Facts on Food Labels
Become a smart shopper by reading food labels to find out more about the foods you eat. The Nutrition Facts panel found on most food labels will help you:

- Find out which foods are good sources of fiber, calcium, iron, and vitamin C
- Compare similar foods to find out which one is lower in fat and calories
- Search for low-sodium foods
- Look for foods that are low in saturated fat and trans fats

A Quick Guide to Reading the Nutrition Facts Label
Start with the Serving Size

- Look here for both the serving size (the amount for one serving), and the number of servings in the package.
- Remember to check your portion size to the serving size listed on the label. If the label serving size is one cup, and you eat two cups, you are getting twice the calories, fat and other nutrients listed on the label.

Check Out the Total Calories and Fat
Find out how many calories are in a single serving and the number of calories from fat. It’s smart to cut back on calories and fat if you are watching your weight!

Let the Percent Daily Values Be Your Guide
Use percent Daily Values (DV) to help you evaluate how a particular food fits into your daily meal plan:

- Daily Values are average levels of nutrients for a person eating 2,000 calories a day. A food item with a 5% DV means 5% of the amount of that a person consuming 2,000 calories a day would eat.
- Remember: percent DV are for the entire day — not just for one meal or snack.
- You may need more or less than 2,000 calories per day. For some nutrients you may need more or less than 100% DV.

The High and Low of Daily Values
- 5 percent or less is low — try to aim low in total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium
- 20 percent or more is high — try to aim high in vitamins, minerals and fiber

For more food label information, visit the Food and Drug Administration at www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers
Try canned or frozen produce
At certain times of the year, frozen and canned fruits and vegetables may be less expensive than fresh. For canned items, choose fruit canned in 100% fruit juice and vegetables with “low sodium” or “no salt added” on the label.

Focus on nutritious, low-cost foods
Certain foods tend to be less expensive, so you can make the most of your food dollars by finding recipes that use the following ingredients: beans, peas, and lentils; sweet or white potatoes; eggs; peanut butter; canned salmon, tuna or crabmeat; grains such as oats, brown rice, barley or quinoa; and frozen or canned fruits and vegetables.

Watch portion sizes
Eating too much of even lower cost foods and beverages can add up to extra dollars and calories. Use smaller plates, bowls and glasses to help keep portions under control. Fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables and the other half with whole grains and lean meat, poultry, seafood or beans. This is an easy way to eat a balanced meal while controlling portions and cost. To complete the meal, add a glass of fat-free or low-fat milk or a serving of fat-free yogurt for dessert.

Make your own healthy snacks
Convenience costs money, so many snacks, even healthy ones, usually cost more when sold individually. Make your own snacks by purchasing large tubs of low-fat yogurt or cottage cheese and dividing them into one-cup containers. For trail mix, combine nuts, dried fruit and whole grain pretzels or cereal; store small portions in airtight containers. Air-popped popcorn and whole fresh fruits in season also tend to cost less compared to pre-packaged items.

Cook more, eat out less
Many foods prepared at home are cheaper and more nutritious. Also, convenience foods like frozen dinners, pre-cut vegetables and instant rice or oatmeal will cost you more than if you make them from scratch. Go back to basics and find a few simple and healthy recipes that your family enjoys.

For a referral to a registered dietitian nutritionist and for additional food and nutrition information visit www.eatright.org.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is the largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. The Academy is committed to improving the public’s health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education and advocacy.