

HELPING CLIENTS MEET MYPLATE GOALS ON A BUDGET

As health professionals we are well aware of the role smart food choices play in health. However, many of our clients, friends and family may experience some form of food hardship or food insecurity – making nutrition concerns secondary to worries about the cost of food. In fact, one in five households with children report that they did not have consistent access to adequate food within the last year.¹

A common misconception is that nutritious choices are more expensive, but this is actually not the case. In fact, USDA research finds that healthy foods cost less than “less healthy” foods for all metrics except the price of food energy. These metrics (for example, the price of an average portion) better reflect the true cost difference between eating healthy and eating less healthy.² So how do you convey that reality to clients, especially when 62% of shoppers believe it “costs too much to eat healthy food”?³ We’ve created an educational guide “**Meeting Your MyPlate Goals on a Budget**” to help you facilitate these conversations with clients.

Within this guide you’ll find suggestions for nutrient-rich choices to fill each section of MyPlate at an affordable cost, as well as time-saving tips, cooking ideas, and delicious low-cost recipes.

THE GUIDE SUPPORTS THE FOLLOWING MYPLATE MESSAGES:

- **FRUITS AND VEGETABLES:** Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
- **GRAINS:** Make at least half your grains whole.
- **PROTEIN:** Choose lean proteins and vary your protein choices.
- **DAIRY:** Choose low-fat (skim or 1%) dairy foods.

Take time during your client visit to discuss ways to maximize affordability and nutrition for optimal health. Have this guide handy to review with clients. Remember that all health professionals, not just registered dietitian nutritionists, play a role in helping clients eat well on a budget.



GRAB CLIENTS’ INTEREST WITH SURPRISING FACTS LIKE THIS ONE!

Serving fruits and veggies for snacks can actually **SAVE** you money. A new study found that a snack-size portion of fruits and veggies costs about 2 cents less on average than a snack-size portion of typical snack foods.⁴

LISTEN FOR CLUES THAT MAY INDICATE A CLIENT IS STRUGGLING TO AFFORD FOOD, SUCH AS:

- A client is struggling to pay for medication costs.
- A client says that he or she skips meals often.
- A parent says “I make sure my kids have enough to eat.”
- A client says “I’d like to eat healthier, but it’s just too expensive.”

Be prepared! Find out what food assistance programs are available in your area to refer clients.

Check out www.whyhunger.org/findfood to find food resources.

References:

¹ <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err-economic-research-report/err155.aspx#.UozlOifw-8B> Last accessed 11/20/13.

² <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/eib-economic-information-bulletin/eib96.aspx#.UiojXH9YSMO>. Last accessed 11/5/13

³ Source: Shopping for Health 2013, Food Marketing Institute and Prevention Magazine. <http://www.fmi.org/industry-topics/health-wellness/shopping-for-health-2013>

⁴ <http://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2012-december/gobbling-up-snacks-cause-or-potential-cure-for-childhood-obesity.aspx#.UiojO39YSMO>

THIS RESOURCE GUIDE IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE FOLLOWING MYPLATE NATIONAL STRATEGIC PARTNERS.

