

# How to Eat Healthy on a Budget

## (a Step-by-Step Guide)

Cooking  
at Home



Meal  
Planning

When people think of healthy eating, they might think it's a trendy effort that can't possibly come cheap. They may visit a specialty health food grocery store and discover that foods that are considered to be "better" for them come at a high price. While it seems cheaper to opt for greasy fast food or junk food snacks from the grocery store, in reality, the road to healthy eating does not have to break the bank if you know what you're doing.

Consistent healthy eating habits can prevent potential complications to your physical and mental well-being and save you money in the long run. After all, chronic illnesses and diseases are not cheap to treat, and doctors' bills start adding up fast.

Use this guide to walk through the steps of eating healthy on a budget. We'd like to show you our greatest secrets and help get you to a better place with both your health and your wallet. Once you have this knowledge, you will no longer feel the need to compromise one for the other.



## Step 1:

### Take Advantage of Meal Planning

A little meal planning can go a long way and make your life easier—especially when your roommate, partner, or kids are asking, “What’s for dinner tonight?” If you plan out the meals you are going to make throughout the week, you’ll only buy what you know you’re going to use for recipes and snacks. This way, you won’t succumb to impulsive purchases and end up wasting food. You want to try to use what you already have and not end up with excess or doubles of the same thing—unless, of course, you need more than one of the same item for a recipe (or have a lot of mouths to feed in your family).

**Bonus Tip:** Pay attention to the number of servings a recipe yields and adjust accordingly! If it’s just you and your partner, consider making a four-serving dinner and eating leftovers for lunch the following day. If you have four growing boys and know they’ll want seconds, consider doubling or even tripling the ingredients.

## Step 2:

### Make a Grocery List and Don’t Shop When Hungry

This step is about getting organized and resisting temptation. If you step into a market when you haven’t eaten all day and let the great smells waft over you, you’re going to have a much harder time resisting temptations. Regardless of how hard you worked to plan out healthy meals, your cart could be filled quickly with some indulgent additions if you are shopping around mealtime.

When you’re hungry, you’re not thinking as clearly as you could be, and you might start letting your eyes and nose get the better of you. When your primal instincts kick in, you’ll go for anything—and it’s the less-than-healthy foods that tend to look the most appetizing at times like these. Let’s face it, not many people reach for a stalk of celery when they’re in binge-snacking mode.





## Step 3:

### Cook Dinner at Home

You don't need to go out to eat. Of course, there are social situations where you will want to [go to a restaurant with family](#), a bar with friends, or a cafe with coworkers. But you can limit the number of times per month you do this—and the number of times you grab fast food as your lunch per week. We are by no means saying that you should never go out to eat or have someone else cook for you again. But when you buy and cook your own food, you know exactly what is going into your meals and can control the ingredients and portion sizes. This is a huge advantage when it comes to healthy eating!

## Step 4:

### Whip Up Larger Portions for Later

Even if you splurge on a few expensive ingredients while making a particular healthy dish, you can stretch your dollar by cooking extra to freeze or eat during other meals throughout the week. One cooking session can create both dinner for that night and lunch for the following day—or dinner next week when you have a busy workday and don't feel like cooking. That's less shopping, spending, and prep work that you will need to do later. Make a big portion, and make it last.





## Step 5:

### Buy Whole Foods, Not Prepared

When you purchase fewer prepared foods, you'll find that your options are less expensive—and healthier. Prepared foods essentially cost more because you're paying for someone else to do the labor—whether that labor is preparing an entire meal or a single ingredient.

Take a standard block of cheese, for instance, over a small bag of shredded cheese. If you look at the price per ounce of the block versus the bag, you'll see that the shredded cheese costs more because the act of shredding that cheese is factored into the price. The same can be said about boneless meat versus meat on the bone, whole fruit versus fruit that is already cut up, and a whole fish versus a filet.

We know that all food can be made homemade, but have you considered making some ingredients yourself—such as granola, salad dressings, or pasta sauce—to save money? Purchasing whole ingredients to make these foods yourself will be healthier and cheaper.

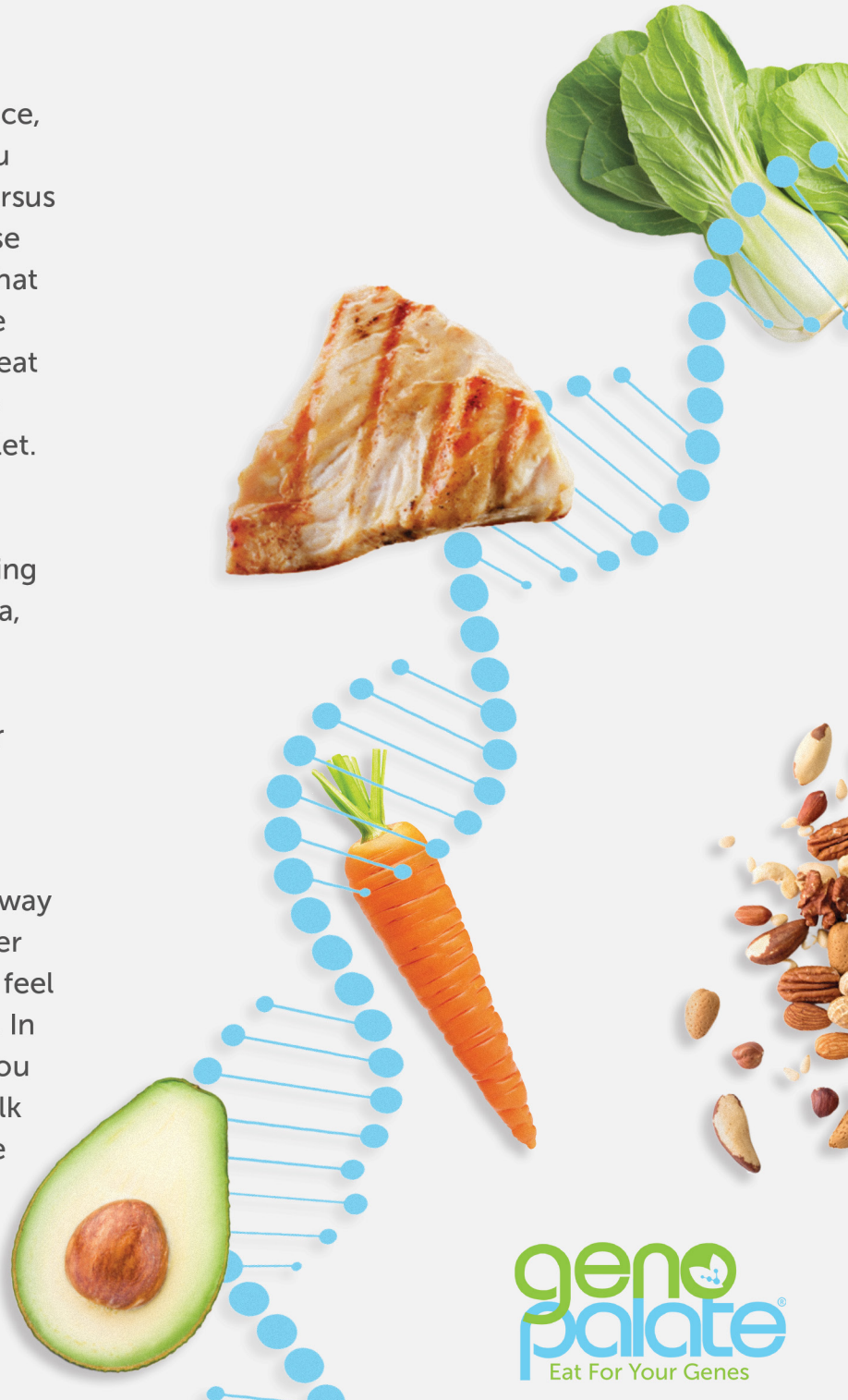
Plus, prepared foods are often processed, which isn't ideal for your body. Eating this way is a win-win—unless, of course, you'd rather save time than save money, in which case, feel free to grab a prepared meal or ingredient. In some cases, this just makes sense. (Have you ever tried deboning a fish, for example? Talk about time-consuming labor! Maybe those few extra dollars are well worth it.



## Step 6:

### Go for the Generic Brands

There's no need to get fancy here. Despite the marketing attempts behind them, brand names don't actually ensure the food is going to taste better. Go for generic or store brands, as you will save money and likely get foods of the same quality.



## Step 7:

### Clip Coupons and Stock Up on Sales

It's coupon-cutting time! Keep an eye out for sales and shop at those times, for those items. This is a strategy many don't take advantage of because they find it more convenient to simply run into the store, quickly grab what they can as fast as they can, and get out so they can get back to their busy schedules. They don't take careful stock of what's in their fridge or pantry and may go replace an item before it goes on sale—or even worse, accidentally buy multiples of something at full price.

However, if you plan it right, you can save loads of money when you take advantage of discounts. The average family of three buys [\\$467 worth of groceries](#) in a single month—that can add up to over \$5,000 per year! Keeping that in mind, you can tell how much even a dollar here and there can really add up when you're buying so many items on a regular basis, especially for larger families.

## Step 8:

### Make Timely Purchases—Buy Seasonal Produce

Aim to get certain produce when it's in season, rather than just whenever you want it. When particular items are out of season, they tend to cost significantly more than when they are in season. This is because farming conditions aren't optimal, so it requires more energy and resources to grow the produce and transport it to the store. Your best bet is to keep track of which fruits and vegetables are [in season throughout the year](#) and plan meals accordingly.





## Step 9:

### Try Convenient Online Buying

When you buy online, you have a wider array of options available to you. You can more easily compare prices on similar products and make your selections based on quality and price. Online grocery shopping has been made remarkably easy, as there are [plenty of providers](#) to choose from—including AmazonFresh, Blue Apron, Instacart, Peapod, and Imperfect Produce—that help get what you need, when you need it.

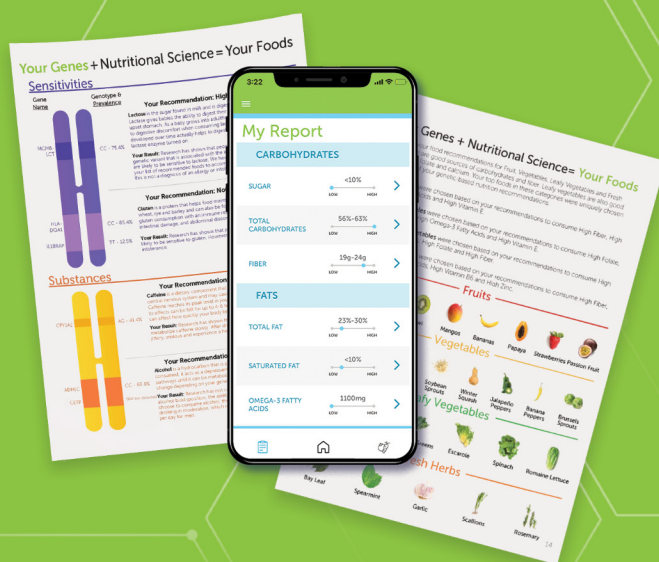
If you don't want to bother with shipping, some services offer delivery for free when you spend a certain amount. For this reason, you might want to consider bulk shopping more frequently. Alternatively, some stores will do your shopping for you and leave your groceries all bagged up and ready to go toward the front of the store, so you simply have to drive over and pick them up.



# You Don't Have to Sacrifice Health for Your Budget

If you follow these basic rules of thumb, you are bound to get on the fast track to a healthier you. Despite what some people might think, eating healthy doesn't have to cost you an arm and a leg.

The healthiest thing to do is be mindful of your food choices instead of always grabbing the first thing that looks good. Having a plan when preparing to feed yourself or your family for the upcoming days or weeks is better for your health and your wallet. You may end up eating less junk food or going to your fast-food spot in town less now that you know a better strategy. But in the end, you'll be glad you found a system that makes you feel great and that you have money to spare for other things you love.



To take it a step further with your friends at GenoPalate, [check out this sample report](#) to see if getting a customized nutrition plan recommendation could be right for you.

[DNA test-based personalized nutrition](#) from GenoPalate has been helping people across the country fine-tune their diet in order to get the most effective results without having to try very hard at all. You'll barely notice you made a few minor tweaks to your eating approach. That is, until you start noticing the benefits of a strengthened immune system and having more energy overall because you know exactly which foods to focus on and which to stay away from!

Your PDF must be downloaded to use links