



A Challenge

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

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I always try things that I recommend for my clients to make sure that they are reasonable and achievable.

Over the years, when clients have indicated that they are struggling financially I ask them “How much do you spend on groceries in a month?” Then “How much do you spend eating out or ordering in?” Finally I query “If all the stores were closed and you couldn’t purchase anything there, how long could you go just by eating what you have in your house right now?”

Often the replies are interesting. I hear things like: “But I wouldn’t have fresh fruit or vegetables” or “I wouldn’t have the things that I really like”.

Now don’t get me wrong. I am definitely not boycotting grocery stores. But I thought I should take my own advice and see how the experience would play out. So I decided to see how long I could go without shopping in a grocery store and instead eat what I already had in my condo.

It is now July 4th as I write this article. I have only been in a grocery once since Christmas. In March I purchased just under \$84.00 at IGA.

Since then I have been eating from:

1. My Pantry - It is amazing how much food you can store in one cupboard. For several weeks I have been enjoying interesting surprises that were stashed in the back of shelves. Brownie mixes, extra bags of sugar and even canned goods that I had forgotten about have been found and used.
2. The Freezer – I live alone but most food is in family-sized packaging. I have been opening the items, cooking half and re-packaging the remainder for another meal in the future. The freezer was a treasure chest of frozen vegetable, fruit and desserts as well as meats, fish and poultry.
3. Local growers – You can purchase fresh vegetables in “huts” around the community without entering grocery stores and therefore not be tempted to just fill up a cart with things you might not need. The choices are not as extensive but this also gives you opportunities to perhaps try something new.
4. Food Trucks – No need for masking-taped lines, cash registers or masks to buy fruit. Just fresh air and fresh produce.

5. Bread, eggs and chickens – I regularly order goods from the Hutterites so these items continue to fill gaps in my menu planning.
6. Drive-through – Family laughs at how I will not hesitate to go through a drive-through if I want milk. One regular sized bottle works for three bowls of cereal!
7. Online – I always order garbage bags, paper products, laundry and dish detergent as well as beverages which are delivered without cost if the order is over \$35.00.

Well, this adventure has been fun! I have certainly saved money and been very creative as supplies have dwindled. I am glad that I have used up things that might otherwise have been neglected or wasted.

Problem is now I am out of butter, mayo, baking supplies and rice. There aren't any food stands that sell those.

Time for a grocery run!