

## Eating Right When the Budget is Tight

*Here are 8 habits to keep more than \$1,000 in your wallet this year*

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When the budget is tight, it certainly makes the job of eating healthy even more challenging than it already is! Why is it that everything that's good for you seems to cost more? While sometimes this is true, there are certainly ways you CAN eat healthy without breaking the bank. Read on to see how the "Power of One Good Habit" can help you tighten your budget and your belt at the same time!



### Habit #1: Bean Booty

Beans are dirt cheap and there is not a single more healthful food for you. Loaded with protein, potassium, folacin, magnesium and soluble fiber, beans are great for lowering both your cholesterol and blood pressure. Not to mention, beans also keep your blood sugar steady thanks to their low glycemic index.

- Enjoy 3-bean chili (you can skip the meat entirely or just use half the amount you normally would).
- Add beans to your salad for a protein boost instead of pricey cheese, ham or tuna.
- Include bean burritos as a high-protein staple (like they are in our house). Add chopped tomato and lettuce and you have a delicious, satisfying meal.
- Make a giant pot of bean soup, freeze and eat for days.
- Use your slow cooker to prepare delicious meals with dried beans for the price of pennies.



Even convenient canned beans are a great deal over the high price of meat. My favorite brand that fills my pantry is organic and no-salt added Eden Foods. (You can order direct from [EdenFoods.com](http://EdenFoods.com) and get 15% off with the "Zonya" discount code!) For 34 delicious, easy recipes that feature economical beans, check out the index of your *Lickety-Split Meals* cookbook.



**Your Bean Booty Payoff: Replacing meat with beans can save \$1.00 per person for each meal. Doing this 4 times a week for a year, your family of four will save \$832 while reducing everyone's risk of heart disease by more than 20%!**

## Habit #2: Chop Chop

For growing teenagers actively involved in competitive sports or adults training for triathlons and marathons, 2 pork chops or chicken breasts might be the right serving size. But for the rest of us, one 4-ounce chicken breast or pork chop is all we need. Yes, really. So... start chopping your meat budget by:

- Limiting your chop to just one instead of two pork chops.
- Sharing a steak and fill the rest of your plate with economical veggies and grains.
- Downsizing your chicken breast to 4 ounces instead of 8 ounces.
- Stop “supersizing” your burgers, and keep it to a quarter pound instead of a third or half – and just have one!

**Your Chop Chop Payoff: A family of four that “chops” their meat habit 3 times a week for a year will save \$500 while each person drops 9 pounds!**

## Habit #3: Dog Gone Good Move

Hot dogs are often a low-cost family staple, but are typically loaded with fat and sodium. Buying the low-fat version is healthier, but also can be twice the cost. The adage that “you get what you pay for” is particularly true here. So to help keep hot dogs healthy while staying in your budget, extend the value of the low-fat hot dogs by serving just one (not two) with a healthy side of baked beans and a fist-full of fruits and veggies.



**Your Dog Gone Payoff: Everyone will be slashing their intake of artery-clogging fat and sodium while not spending a dime more for it.**

## Habit #4: 12-Month Turkey Tradition



Looking for a budget-friendly way to buy 97% fat-free lunch meat? You WON'T find the answer in the deli section! Roast a whole turkey once a month (without all the trimmings) then slice, bag and freeze the leftovers in individual lunch servings. This is tons cheaper than the deli meat and you'll have LEAN, unprocessed meat (no sodium nitrate and much healthier) for sandwiches all month long! A perfect low-budget meat for casseroles as well!

**Your Turkey Tradition Payoff: Saves dollars while eliminating loads of bad sodium nitrate for the entire family.**

## Habit #5: Detour the Snack Aisles

One of the biggest challenges with eating healthy on a tight budget is buying all the produce your family truly needs. This is where “robbing Peter to pay Paul” definitely has positive results. Just detour the aisles with chips, candy and cookies. You know these snacks cost a bundle, so take every dollar you might spend in these aisles and apply it to fruits and vegetables. Fruit truly is nature’s dessert and fresh veggies are perfect for snacking. The produce aisle is where all the disease-fighting foods are hanging out, and regardless of budget, a fist-size serving should be present at every meal and snack. And because fruits and veggies are loaded with fiber, one apple or handful of carrot sticks will fill you up faster than a 99-cent bag of chips or stack of Oreo cookies.



Buy a few frozen and canned varieties for late in the week when your fresh supply runs low, and check your local farmer’s market for the best in-season buys. Making this a weekly habit can change your life, both physically and fiscally!

**Your Detour Payoff:** Same grocery bill, but you will need to buy a smaller belt! And since you will be healthy and active well into your 90’s, make sure your retirement plan is in great shape too.

## Habit #6: Bag the Box



Tempted to buy that box of prepared scalloped potatoes for dinner? Not only is this a load of pennies for just one meal, it’s an overload of sodium to boot. Instead, buy a bag of potatoes that’ll serve 3 meals for the same price! You’ll be helping your blood pressure and weight while saving money. The same goes for the box of prepared rice dishes. Buy a whole bag of rice (brown of course!) and you’ll get 7 meals for the price of one! See my *Unfried Rice* recipe on page 107 of *Lickety-Split Meals* for economical “flavored rice” that’s sure to please your palate and your pocketbook. Make sure to check out 34 more of my wholesome potato and rice recipes in your *Lickety-Split Meals* cookbook.

**Your Bag the Box Payoff:** In addition to getting 3-7 more meals for the price of one, you bump up the fiber and nutrients while avoiding the extra sodium. Bye-bye high blood pressure!

## Habit #7: Whole-Grain Pasta Surprise Savings

You know you should buy whole-grain pasta, but it costs 25% more. What you don't know is the surprise savings when serving whole-grain instead of white. The same amount of whole-grain pasta will actually serve three times as many people. Surprise! How can that be you ask? The extra fiber in whole-grain pasta (3 times more) helps people "fill up" on just one cup of pasta, while the "empty-calorie" white pasta takes cup after cup after cup!!! And of course, each added cup means added inches to your waistline. It's hard for the mind to calculate, but even though the price on a 16-oz. box of whole-grain pasta is more, you will NOT be spending any more to feed your family because the same size box will yield more "practical" servings. Trust me on this!

**Your Whole-Grain Pasta Payoff:** In addition to getting more fiber and diabetes-fighting chromium and zinc, the calorie savings of a "moderate serving" of whole-grain pasta twice a week for a year means each person in your family will drop 5 pounds!



## Habit #8: Sweet Surrender

Tightening your budget and your waistline doesn't have to mean eliminating sweet treats altogether, especially if you shop smart and apply moderation. Even though the low-fat ice cream might cost 10% more than the high-fat containers, you can actually save half the cost and still enjoy sweets 3 nights a week! How? Just serve 1 scoop in a mug instead of 2 scoops in a bowl and you'll never feel deprived! And even when you're at the local ice cream shop, just ask for the "kiddie cone." It costs half the price of a "single" and really is a perfect amount for everyone in the family! Remember, there's freedom within boundaries and this is a perfect example.

**Your Sweet Surrender Payoff:** In a year's time of enjoying a scoop of ice cream 3 nights a week, you'll save money, lower your cholesterol, never feel deprived... and lose 14 pounds!

As you can see, there are many creative ways to enjoy the food we love while being good stewards of our food budget and our family's health. Enjoy choosing wisely and reaping the benefits of the "Power of One Good Habit!"

