

THE PANTRY STAPLES



Written by the Public Health Nutrition Team, Nutrition Services, CCLHD with assistance from Jessica Herd, Bachelor of Nutrition and Dietetics student (2023), University of Newcastle.

This resource provides general information only.

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Central Coast
Local Health District



How to eat right when the money's tight



Healthy eating doesn't mean you have to spend a lot.

In fact, maintaining a healthy and balanced diet will help keep you stronger for longer and has protective effects against costly chronic diseases such as heart disease and Type 2 Diabetes. So, move over ' \$20 quinoa salads' and '10-ingredient vegie juices', the journey to a healthy diet is more cost-effective than it seems.



A balanced diet is all about eating a range of healthy foods across the day.

Adding vegetables, fruit, grain foods, dairy and high-protein foods such as meat, eggs and beans to your daily meals will help to increase your energy, maintain your muscle mass, and keep you at a healthy weight. In this guide we're going to show you ways to get a range of healthy foods into your diet that are cost-effective and convenient for one-person households.



Choose store brands for good quality food products at a lower price.

Supermarkets will often stock pantry staples such as rice, pasta, flour, eggs, milk and canned vegetables and tuna in store brands. These are often at a much lower price than big name brands. Buy these products in bulk for even more savings on your grocery bills.

This booklet includes simple recipes using common pantry items from the five food groups.

Recipe cost is a guide, and assumes use of store brand ingredients. Recipe cost was calculated using online supermarket prices September 2023.

For this booklet Tb = tablespoon, eg "1 Tb" means one tablespoon (20ml) and tsp = teaspoon (5ml), 1 cup = 250ml.

For more information on the five food groups for good health, visit www.eatforhealth.gov.au

BRING ON THE BEANS

Canned beans are a brilliant source of energy, protein and fibre. These can be stored unopened in the pantry for years. Buy in bulk when they're on sale for an affordable addition to meals. They count as a source of both protein and vegetables. At most supermarkets, a 420g can of store brand beans costs around \$1.

BREKKY



BEANS & EGG ON TOAST

Try adding $\frac{1}{2}$ a cup of baked beans & 1 fried egg to a wholemeal slice of toast for a protein packed start to the day!

TOTAL COST = \$1.20

LUNCH



MEXICAN SALAD BOWL

Mix up a Mexican style salad by adding $\frac{1}{2}$ a cup of canned kidney beans to $\frac{1}{2}$ a cup of cooked brown rice, 1 chopped up tomato & $\frac{1}{2}$ a cup of cooked corn for an energising midday meal!

TOTAL COST = \$2.30

DINNER



FASTER PASTA

Fry $\frac{1}{2}$ a diced onion, a garlic clove & a chopped up tomato with olive oil in a saucepan. Toss in $\frac{1}{2}$ a cup of chickpeas after 5 minutes. Spoon onto $\frac{1}{2}$ a cup of cooked pasta for a cheap & nutritious dinner!

TOTAL COST = \$2.50

EASY WAYS TO EAT EGGS

Eggs are an excellent way to increase the protein content of meals without blowing your budget. They're full of nutrients such as vitamin B and D, can be bought at store brand prices for around \$5 a dozen and can be stored for 3–5 weeks in the fridge.

BREKKY



SCRAMBLED EGGS

Whisk 2 eggs with a splash of milk & add to a pan coated with 1 tsp of margarine. Gently stir over medium heat until just set. Serve with 1-2 slices of wholegrain toast or a wrap for an energised start to the day.

TOTAL COST = \$1

LUNCH



ROAST VEG FRITTATA

Add 4 beaten eggs to 2 cups of leftover mixed roast vegetables & ½ a cup of grated cheese. Pour into a greased baking tin & bake at 180 degrees for about 30 minutes. Store leftovers covered in the fridge.

COST PER SERVE = \$3 (makes 2 serves)

DESSERT



PROTEIN PACKED PANCAKES

Beat 1 egg with ⅓ cup of milk. Add ½ cup of self-raising flour and 1 tsp of sugar & mix into the egg mixture with a whisk. Lightly coat a pan with margarine & pour a ¼ cup of batter in at a time, flipping once bubbles form on the surface. Cook until golden on both sides & serve with sliced fruit & yoghurt for a tasty, protein packed treat!

TOTAL COST = \$1

DELICIOUS WAYS TO ENJOY DAIRY

Dairy foods provide protein and energy that will help keep your muscles strong and your body fuelled throughout the day. Milk, cheese and yoghurt are also great sources of calcium, a mineral that helps to keep your bones healthy.

BREKKY



BANANA SMOOTHIE

Blend 1 cup of cow's milk with 3 Tb of yoghurt, 1 Tb of rolled oats and a banana to make a healthy smoothie that will energise you throughout the day.

TOTAL COST = \$1.30

LUNCH



GREEK YOGHURT DIP

Mix 1 cup of Greek yoghurt, a ¼ tsp of garlic powder, a ¼ tsp of onion powder, 1 tsp of olive oil, 1 tsp of lime juice & a sprinkle of salt for a delicious and nutritious dip that can be spread on boiled potatoes, a sandwich or wholegrain crackers.

TOTAL COST = \$1.80 per cup

DINNER



PROTEIN PACKED PUMPKIN SOUP

Blend 8 Tb of milk powder with 1 cup of warm water & 2 cups of cooked pumpkin until smooth. Top with a handful of your favourite nuts for a nutritious soup to have at lunch or dinner.

COST PER SERVE = \$2.50 (makes 2 serves)

EASY WAYS TO EAT MORE VEG & FRUIT

Eaten fresh, frozen or canned, vegetables and fruit are one of the best sources of minerals, vitamins and fibre that can be bought on a low budget. When choosing fresh varieties, buy those in season such as carrots & broccoli all year round, tomatoes in Summer and sweet potato in Winter for extra savings.

SNACK



VEGIE STICKS & DIP

Chop up sticks of carrots, cucumber or celery & eat with your favourite dip such as hummus or tzatziki for an easy & nutritious snack that's packed with fibre.

TOTAL COST = \$1.90 per serve

MAIN



CURRIED VEGETABLES & RICE

Simmer 2 cups of chopped canned, fresh or frozen vegetables with 2 tsp of curry powder, 2 tsp of gravy mix & 1 ½ cups of water in a saucepan for 5-10 minutes. Add to ½ a cup of boiled rice for a healthy & energising dinner meal.

TOTAL COST = \$1.50

DESSERT



FRUIT CRUMBLE

For a sweet treat that gives you a serve of fruit per bowl, mix 2 Tb of flour, 1 tsp of sugar, 1 Tb of desiccated coconut and 2 Tb of rolled oats in a bowl. Rub through 1 Tb of margarine. Sprinkle on top of 200g of canned apple or peaches. Pop in the oven on 180 degrees C for about 15 minutes.

TOTAL COST = \$1.65

LET'S HEAR IT FOR WHOLEGRAINS

Wholegrains are an affordable and nutritious source of energy. These should be included in the everyday diet. They are rich in fibre that helps your digestive system to function well. They also protect against chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. Including grains as a base in meals will help meet your fibre needs.

BREKKY



EXCELLENT OATS

Combine 1 cup of milk, ½ a banana, 1 Tb peanut butter and ½ a cup of oats & microwave on medium for 3 minutes for a bang on brekky.

TOTAL COST = \$1.20

LUNCH



HIGH FIBRE SANDWICH

Add 2 slices of wholegrain bread to leftover cold meat or egg, tasty cheese & salad for a delicious lunch that will help keep you fuller for longer.

TOTAL COST = \$1.80

DINNER



EASY FRIED RICE

Add ½ an onion, ½ a cup of frozen peas & corn & a small chopped carrot to a pan with 1 Tb of oil. Cook until tender & combine with ½ a cup of boiled brown rice, 1 boiled egg & a splash of soy sauce for an easy fried rice.

TOTAL COST = \$2

WHY TUNA IS TERRIFIC

Canned tuna is a terrific source of protein to have in the pantry. At only \$1-\$2 per 100g, it is both a healthy and affordable ingredient to bump up the nutrient profile of meals. A 95g can contains around 10g of protein and is also a good source of omega-3 fatty acids, a type of fat vital to eye and brain health.

SNACK



FISH CAKES

Mix 425g of canned tuna with 5 boiled & mashed potatoes, 1 finely chopped onion & 2 beaten eggs. Roll 2 Tb portions in breadcrumbs, flatten slightly & fry on moderate heat for 5 minutes on each side for a protein-packed mid-meal snack.

COST PER SERVE = \$2 (makes 5 serves)

LUNCH



TUNA SANDWICH

Add a 95g can of tuna to 2 slices of wholegrain bread, sliced tomato, lettuce & mayonnaise for a terrific tuna sandwich that's a great source of energy.

TOTAL COST = \$2.60

DINNER



TUNA & VEGIE PASTA BAKE

Mix 2 cups of chopped roast vegetables with 425g of canned tuna, a 400g can of diced tomatoes, 2 cups of cooked pasta & 1 Tb of tomato paste in a bowl. Add mixture to a baking dish & sprinkle with $\frac{3}{4}$ of a cup of tasty cheese. Bake at 180 degrees for 20 minutes & store leftovers covered in the fridge or freezer.

COST PER SERVE = \$2.30 (makes 4 serves)