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## **FOR RELEASE**

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### **Five County Solutions**

**“Managing Between Jobs”**

**Seventh in a Ten Part Series**

Food prices have “gone through the roof”. We need to take a serious look at how we shop for our food to get the most nutritional foods for the best price. According to the Department of labor it is estimated that the average American family of four spends \$8,513 per year on groceries. That averages out to \$709 per month. For some families, that rivals a mortgage payment. Improving shopping habits, food storage practices and food preparation skills can help you cope with the rising cost of food.

Consider the following tips. Circle the ideas you are currently using; then consider some new money-saving ideas suggested in this article.

Remember many of the following tips are simply suggestions, not golden rules.

#### Shopping Skills:

1. Never shop for food when you are hungry.
2. Plan meals for a week at a time.
3. Shop with a list.
4. Start list early in the week, so you can list items as they begin to run low.
5. Shop for intended use.
6. Set a food budget; stick with it.
7. Buy food for a week at a time. Frequent trips to the supermarket can increase the amount of money spent on food. Research shows that making a “quick trip” to the store ends up costing 54 percent more than intended.

8. Take advantage of weekly specials and store coupons. Use coupons for products you will use.
9. Compare unit prices. (Some stores already do this for you.)
10. Try the generic or store brand products over the National brands.
11. Consider the importance of brand loyalty to you.
12. Remember, a bargain which is never used and allowed to spoil is not a bargain.
13. Regarding perishable foods, buy only what can be used before spoilage.
14. Stock up on specials which have a long shelf life.
15. Just remember to plan shopping trips wisely to make the trip worthwhile for the money spent on gasoline.
16. Stick to basic foods for maximum versatility.
17. Buy seasonal foods in season.
18. When prices become exorbitant on some "favorite" foods, consider substitutes. (Ex. When the price of iceberg lettuce soars, consider buying other types of salad greens, such as romaine, endive or spinach, which may be less expensive at the time.)
19. Read the label. Get your money's worth in nutrition.
20. Refuse to buy expensive, empty calorie foods.
21. If possible, shop without your children. This cuts down on the temptation to pick up toys or treats that the children see and want.

#### Storing Skills:

1. Wrap foods to retain freshness.
2. Store fresh vegetables in the appropriate section of the refrigerator. Don't allow vegetables to sit in water.
3. Rotate foods. Use the least fresh first.
4. Know the shelf life of the different foods.
5. Most foods will store better in a cool, dry, well-ventilated place. (Ex.: onions, potatoes, dry beans, canned foods.)
6. Seek out alternative places in your home to store foods. Kitchens are often too warm to store many foods properly.
7. Avoid wasting food.
8. Freeze foods for later use.
9. Check the seal and temperature setting on the refrigerator.

#### Preparation Skills

1. Invest in (and use) a good general purpose cookbook.
2. Keep eyes and ears open for new ideas. Tap resources such as family and friends, the newspaper, magazines, and the internet.
3. Learn to use appropriate cooking methods.
4. Take good care of kitchen utensils and appliances.
5. Use oven to bake as many things at the same time as possible. You can at least piggy back on its use.
6. Select appropriate pan sizes for the size of heating elements. Conserving energy saves you money.
7. Serve one meatless meal a week. Seek out recipes for high protein meatless dishes.
8. Create a recipe file for imaginative uses of leftovers. (The internet is loaded with information.)
9. Make available low cost snacks, which are usually low calorie snacks as well.

10. Learn to tenderize meats by pounding, marinating, or scoring. Using low temperature, slow cookery and moist heat methods will also tenderize less tender cuts of beef.
11. Learn the wholesale cuts of meat. This will enable you not only to shop wisely, but to choose the appropriate cooking methods.
12. Start tomorrow's dinner tonight. It just might keep you from eating out when you hadn't planned to eat out.

### Others

1. Plan a garden.
2. Preserve garden foods. Even buying in bulk and preserving the foods yourself can be a cost cutter.
3. Investigate alternative places to shop.
4. Take your lunch to work.
5. Drink water (from the tap) instead of soda pop or bottled water.
6. Eat at home instead of eating out.
7. Entertain at home with a pot luck.
8. Don't stop for that cup of coffee or soda pop. Take your beverage with you, this will add up to big savings.

These tips will save you several dollars on your food bill. There are many expenditures families can eliminate, but food isn't one of them. So, please follow these tips to assist in holding your food budget down.

Source:

Rose Fisher Merkowitz, OSU Extension-Highland County, 119 Governor Foraker Place, Hillsboro, OH 45133

[Tips to Help Lower the Grocery Bill](#), Oklahoma State University, March 27, 2008.

Many of you are facing uncertain times due to future job losses in our area. Ohio State University Extension wants to help with accurate information on how to deal with these uncertain times and the financial and emotional strain you will experience.

Family and Consumer Sciences Educators in these five adjoining counties (Clinton, Fayette, Greene, Highland, and Montgomery) are working together to provide information through news articles, factsheets, and possible class sessions. You can contact us at any time for more information and resources. In Greene County, please contact Melanie Hart at (937) 372-9971 or [hart.382@cfaes.osu.edu](mailto:hart.382@cfaes.osu.edu) for more information

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