

COMBAT RISING FOOD COSTS

It is becoming more difficult all the time for Canadian families to put healthy and satisfying meals on the table. We've experienced rising food costs over the past year and this is forecasted to continue throughout 2016. According to the Guelph Food Institute the highest price increases will be fruit, vegetables and meat. Knowing this how do you maximize your food dollars?

Grocery stores want shoppers to buy products on impulse and therefore spend more. Plan ahead by checking prices and making a grocery list in order to avoid spending money unnecessarily. It is also a great idea to prepare larger meals, this way you can buy in bulk to save money and then freeze leftovers for lunches and dinners.

To cut costs and boost your nutrition intake remember to use fruits and vegetables that are in season. Try to buy in bulk when prices are low and freeze or preserve to have on hand year round. At certain times of the year frozen or canned fruits and vegetables may be cheaper than their fresh counterparts. Freezing is an especially good method for preserving nutritional value and remember to choose canned products with little or no added salt and sugar. Cook with root vegetables – such as turnips, parsnips, potatoes and carrots – by boiling, baking or microwaving.

Using protein alternatives at least two to three times per week is also a great idea as meat is often the most expensive part of a meal. Pulses are a great source of nutrients and fibre and they provide good quality protein to keep you full for longer. You can either soak and cook dry beans, which is the cheapest option, or buy canned beans if time and convenience are a factor. If you are using meat, buy tougher pieces such as a chuck roast and use in roasts or stews.

Finally, use the Interior Health [Store It Guide](#) to prevent food wastage by helping your produce stay fresh longer. Just search for 'Store it' on the Interior Health website and you will find some great information and a helpful chart to post on your fridge - plus you will find out why it's good for onions to wear pantyhose!