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# Convenient Meals On a Budget: A Guide for Healthy Eating

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# Convenient Meals On a Budget: A Guide for Healthy Eating

## **Abstract**

Eating a healthy, balanced diet provides important nutrients to your body. These nutrients give you energy and keep your heart beating, your brain active and your muscles working. Nutrients also help build and strengthen bones, muscles, and tendons as well as regulating body processes, such as blood pressure. This booklet provides nutritional tips, as well as a guide for what a week of healthy diet could consist of.

## **Cover Page Footnote**

Professor Anna Page was the Faculty Adviser for this Honors contract.

# Convenient Meals on a Budget

## A Guide for Healthy Eating



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# Table of Contents

Why eat healthy? .....	<b>1</b>
Tips for Healthy Meals & Cooking .....	<b>2-3</b>
Overview .....	<b>4</b>
Healthy Menu Ideas.....	<b>5-11</b>
Recipe Ideas.....	<b>12-17</b>
About us.....	<b>18</b>



## Why eat healthy?

Eating a healthy, balanced diet provides important nutrients to your body. These nutrients give you energy and keep your heart beating, your brain active and your muscles working. Nutrients also help build and strengthen bones, muscles, and tendons as well as regulating body processes, such as blood pressure.

*“Let your food be your medicine and your medicine be your food.”-Hippocrates*

## Healthy Eating Can Help Prevent Disease

Good nutrition can lower your risk of developing a range of chronic diseases. For example eating more fruit and vegetables can help lower blood pressure and may lower your risk of certain types of cancer. Healthy eating can also help people that already have some types of disease or illness such as diabetes, high cholesterol and blood pressure. Try to achieve balance in your diet, include lots of variety and remember, all things in moderation.



# 10 Tips For Healthy Meals

A healthy meal starts with more vegetables and fruits and smaller portions of protein and grains.

1. **Make half your plate veggies and fruits**- Vegetables and fruits are full of nutrients and may help to promote good health.
2. **Add lean protein**- Choose protein foods, such as lean beef and pork, or chicken, turkey, beans, or tofu. Twice a week, make, seafood the protein on your plate.
3. **Include whole grains**- Aim to make at least half your grains whole grains. Whole grains provide more nutrients and fiber than refined grains.
4. **Don't forget the dairy**- Pair your meal with a cup of fat-free or low-fat milk. They provide the same amount of calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk but less fat and calories.
5. **Avoid extra fat**- Using heavy gravies or sauces will add fat and calories to otherwise healthy choices.
6. **Take your time**- Savor your food. Eat slowly, enjoy the taste and pay attention to how you feel. Eating very quickly may cause you to eat too much.
7. **Use a smaller plate**- Using a smaller plate can help with portion control.
8. **Take control of your food**- Eat at home more often so you know exactly what you are eating.
9. **Try new food**- Keep it interesting by picking out new foods you've never tried before. You may find a new favorite!
10. **Satisfy your sweet tooth in healthy way**- Indulge in a naturally sweet dish...Fruit!

## Healthy Cooking Tips

1. Instead of frying, try baking, broiling, boiling, or microwaving.
2. Remove skin from poultry (like chicken or turkey).
3. Cool soups and gravies and skim off fat before reheating them.
5. Eat fruits canned in their own juice rather than syrup.



# Overview

This booklet was created in conjunction with the Johnson County Community College **Hunger in the Heartland Project**. The goal of this project is to show that healthy meals can be both convenient and inexpensive. This project was sponsored under a grant by Unilever in conjunction with the Enactus Club and the Nutrition Club.

The following menus and recipes were created using select items that can be found at most convenience stores. These menus were created to meet at least 75% of the daily recommended intakes (DRI's) for:

**Calcium**

**Protein**

**Iron**

**Potassium**

**Folate**

**Fiber**

**Vitamin A**

**Vitamin C**

We chose these nutrients because they are considered "leader" nutrients, which means If you are getting your daily amount of leader nutrients, you are likely getting the rest of your nutrient needs met! Healthy eating is balance, moderation and variety. While foods available in a food desert may not be optimal nutrition, knowing how to select foods that will meet the minimum requirements for different food groups in the MyPlate system will aid in consuming healthier meals. Canned and frozen fruits and vegetables can be nutritious and are an alternative if fresh is not available or too expensive. The menus were analyzed using the USDA Supertracker <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/supertracker> and nutrient needs were based on a hypothetical 5'6" 150 lb. female. The cost of meals was at or under \$4.50 a day which is the average SNAP benefits for the Kansas City Metropolitan area. Prices were based on Spring 2015.

**Our inventories were compiled from the items available at Casey's, Conoco and Dollar General in Desoto, Kansas**



# A Week of Healthy Meals

on less than \$4.50 a day

## Day 1:

### Breakfast

- 1/2 cup Oatmeal (\$0.08)
- 1 slice Whole Wheat Bread (\$0.07)
- 8 oz. V-8 Juice (\$0.25)
- 1/4 cup Raisins (\$0.29)
- 8 oz. Skim Milk (\$0.26)
- 2 Tbs. Peanut Butter (\$0.14)

### Lunch

- 1 Hamburger Bun (\$0.16)
- 2/3 cup Canned Potatoes (\$0.30)
- 1/2 cup Applesauce (\$0.24)
- 8 oz. Skim Milk (\$0.26)
- 3 oz. Cooked Chicken Breast (\$0.81)
- 1 Tbs. Mayo for Chicken Sandwich (\$0.03)

### Dinner

- 1/2 cup Rice (\$0.30)
- 1/2 cup Canned Spinach (\$0.29)
- 1/4 cup Tomato Sauce (\$0.10)
- 1/2 cup Canned Pineapple (\$0.29)
- 1/2 cup Tapioca Pudding (\$0.25)
- 1/2 cup Pinto Beans (\$0.19)

See Recipe for Southwestern Beans and Rice

Total Cost: \$4.31

Protein	81 g	Iron	20 mg
Fiber	25 g	Vitamin A	1268 ug
Calcium	1146 mg	Vitamin C	101 mg
Potassium	3686 mg	Folate	467 ug

## Day 2:

### Breakfast

Egg Scramble  
1 Egg (\$0.17)  
2/3 cup canned potatoes (\$0.30)  
and  
1 slice American cheese (\$0.18)  
1/2 cup Pineapple (\$0.29)

### Lunch

Tuna Salad  
4 oz. Tuna (\$0.48)  
1 T. Mayonnaise (\$.03)  
and  
1 1/2 tsp. Sweet Relish (.03)  
1/2 cup Peaches (\$0.36)  
1 cup chocolate instant pudding (\$0.21)

### Dinner

1 cup Spaghetti Noodles (\$0.16)  
1/2 cup Tomato Sauce (\$0.35)  
2 oz. Cooked Chicken Breast (\$0.61)  
1/2 cup Mixed Vegetables (\$0.19)  
1/2 cup Spinach (\$0.29)  
8 oz. Skim Milk (\$0.26)

### Snack

1 cup Raisin Bran (\$0.30)  
14 oz. Skim Milk (\$.13)

**Total Cost:** \$4.34

Protein	98 g	Iron	22 mg
Fiber	26g	Vitamin A	1951ug
Calcium	1250 mg	Vitamin C	69 mg
Potassium	3647	Folate	685 ug

### Day 3:

#### Breakfast

4 oz. Orange Juice (\$0.40)  
1 Scrambled Egg (\$0.17)  
with  
1/2 cup Canned Spinach (\$0.29)  
1 slice Wheat Bread (\$0.07)  
8 oz. Skim Milk (\$0.26)

#### Lunch

3 oz. Chicken Breast (\$0.61)  
1/2 cup Instant Mashed Potatoes (\$0.12)  
1/2 cup Canned Carrots (\$0.19)  
1/2 cup Canned Peaches (\$0.36)  
1 slice Wheat Bread (\$0.07)  
2 cups Iced Tea (\$0.08)

#### Dinner

2 cups Spaghetti (\$0.16)  
3/4 cup Spaghetti Sauce (\$0.40)  
2 oz. Ground Beef (\$0.75)  
1/2 cup Canned Pineapple (\$0.29)

Protein	96 g	Iron	14 mg
Fiber	21 g	Vitamin A	1423 ug
Calcium	998 mg	Vitamin C	77 mg
Potassium	3519mg	Folate	626ug

## Day 4:

### Breakfast

1 cup Raisin Bran (\$0.30)  
1 cup Skim Milk (\$0.26)  
1 Egg (\$0.17)  
8 oz. Orange Juice(\$0.79)

### Lunch

2 slices Wheat Bread (\$0.14)  
1/2 cup Canned Spinach(\$0.29)  
2oz Cooked Ham (\$0.38)  
1 Tbsp. Mustard (\$0.04)  
1 cups Skim Milk (\$0.26)

### Dinner

1/2 cup Green Beans (\$0.19)  
1 slice Wheat Bread (\$0.07)  
2 oz. Ground Beef for Hamburger Steak (\$0.67)  
1/2 cup Instant Potato (\$0.12)  
1/2 cup Pineapple (\$0.29)

### Snacks

8 oz. V-8 Juice (\$0.25)  
1 oz. Peanuts (\$0.20)

**Total Cost:** \$4.42

Protein	89 g	Iron	19 mg
Fiber	24 g	Vitamin A	1527 ug
Calcium	1347 mg	Vitamin C	181 mg
Potassium	4188 mg	Folate	626 ug

## Day 5:

### Breakfast

1 packet instant Oatmeal (\$0.17)  
1/2 cup Canned Pineapple (\$0.29)  
8 oz. Skim Milk (\$0.26)  
1 Eggs (\$0.17)

### Lunch

2 cups Canned Chili (\$1.00)  
1/2 cup Canned Peaches (\$0.36)  
6 Saltine Crackers (\$0.06)

### Dinner

1/2 cup Mixed Vegetables (\$0.19)  
1/2 cup White Rice (\$0.30)  
8 oz. Skim Milk (\$0.26)  
3 oz. Cooked Chicken Breast (\$0.81)

### Snacks:

1 oz. Pretzels (\$0.08)  
8 oz. V-8 Juice (\$0.25)  
1/4 cup Raisins (\$0.25)

**Total Cost:** \$4.45

Protein	59 g	Iron	21 mg
Fiber	29 g	Vitamin A	1414 ug
Calcium	970 mg	Vitamin C	110 mg
Potassium	3591 mg	Folate	403 ug

## Day 6:

### Breakfast

2 slices Wheat Bread (\$0.14)  
1 Egg fried with cooking spray (\$0.17)  
1/2 cup Orange Juice (\$0.40)

### Lunch

1 slice Pepperoni Pizza (\$0.92)  
2/3 Sweet Potatoes broiled with cooking spray (\$0.38)

### Dinner

Salmon Cake (\$0.72)  
1/2 cup Bean Salad\*(\$0.75)  
**See Recipe for Salmon cakes and Bean Salad**  
1 cup Skim Milk (\$0.26)

### Snack

6oz. V-8 Juice (\$0.19)  
1/4 cup Raisins (\$.29)  
1 cup Hot Chocolate (\$0.27)

**Total Cost:** \$4.49

Protein	79 g	Iron	14 mg
Fiber	21 g	Vitamin A	1793 ug
Calcium	1312 mg	Vitamin C	145 mg
Potassium	35513mg	Folate	405 ug

## Day 7:

### Breakfast

1 cup Oatmeal (\$0.17)  
 1 tbs. Raisins(\$0.25)  
 8 oz. Skim Milk (\$0.26)

### Lunch

3/4 cup Mac & Cheese (\$0.49)  
 1/4 cup Peas (\$0.10)  
 1 oz. diced Cooked Ham (\$0.19)  
 1/4 cup Carrots (\$0.10)  
 1/2 cup Peaches (\$0.36)

### Dinner

1/2 cup Brown Rice (\$0.49)  
 3 oz. Cooked Chicken Breast (\$0.81)  
 1/2 cup Spinach (\$0.29)  
 1/2 cup diced Tomatoes(\$0.19)  
 1 slice Bacon (\$0.34)  
 See Recipe for Spinach and Tomato Chicken  
 ½ cup Mixed Fruit (\$0.32)

### Snack

1 oz. Pretzel Sticks (\$0.08)

**Total Cost:** \$4.44

<b>Protein</b>	<b>73 g</b>	<b>Iron</b>	<b>25 mg</b>
<b>Fiber</b>	<b>23 g</b>	<b>Vitamin A</b>	<b>1857 ug</b>
<b>Calcium</b>	<b>958 mg</b>	<b>Vitamin C</b>	<b>60 mg</b>
<b>Potassium</b>	<b>2810 mg</b>	<b>Folate</b>	<b>568 ug</b>

## Recipes

### Southwestern Beans and Rice:

1 can Pinto Beans  
½ tsp Cumin  
¼ tsp Garlic Powder  
¼ tsp Chipotle Powder (optional)  
¼ tsp Chili Powder  
¼ tsp Onion Powder  
½ cup White or Brown Rice  
½ can Tomato Sauce  
1 Tbsp. Canola Oil  
1 cup Water

For Rice: Heat Canola oil in a skillet over medium-high heat.  
Season oil with onion powder and garlic powder.  
Add rice to oil.  
Cook and stir rice in seasoned oil until rice is golden.  
(2 to 4 minutes)  
Pour water and tomato sauce over the rice; stir.  
Bring the mixture to a boil, cover the skillet,  
Reduce heat to medium low and simmer until tender (15 minutes)  
Rice can also be cooked in a microwave.

For Beans: Put beans in sauce pan over medium-low heat.  
Add cumin, chipotle powder (optional) and chili powder  
Cover the sauce pan and let sit until thoroughly heated





## Recipes

### Salmon Cakes:

- 1 can salmon, drained and flaked
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 tsp. ground black pepper
- 3 tbs. vegetable oil

Pick through salmon and remove any bones. In a mixing bowl, beat eggs add salmon and pepper. Mix thoroughly.

Shape into 2 ounce patties (about 7 or 8). In a large skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Fry each patty for 5 minutes on each side or until crispy and golden brown. (Serves 4)



### Bean Salad:

- 1 can cut green beans, drained
- 1 cup canned kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 tbs. sugar
- 2 tbs. white vinegar
- 1 tbs. oil
- 1/8 tsp. ground black pepper

## Recipes

### Spinach and Tomato Chicken

2 skinless, chicken breast

1 can diced tomatoes

1 can spinach (squeezed dry)

2 slices of bacon

Salt/pepper

Onion powder to taste (optional)

Garlic powder to taste (optional)

Mix tomatoes and spinach together.

Place chicken breast on top of mixture.

Season with onion and garlic powder, salt & pepper

Lay bacon strip on top of chicken.

Cover with foil and bake at 350 degree oven.

Cook until chicken is tender.

Serve with rice, place chicken breast on rice and spoon over with the spinach and tomato sauce.

Serves: 2

Source: sparkpeople.com

## Making a Meal from What's On Hand

Here is a easy, economical, healthy way to make a casserole from what's on hand, use up leftovers and produce a meal. Make up the Casserole Sauce Mix ahead of time and use it in place of canned cream soups.

### Casserole Sauce Mix Recipe

- 2 cups nonfat milk
- 3/4 cup cornstarch
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/4 cup instant lower sodium chicken bouillon
- 2 tablespoons dried minced onion
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder (optional)
- 2 tablespoons parsley flakes (optional)

1. Combine all ingredients and store in an airtight container.
2. To use as substitute for one can condensed soup, mix 1/3 cup dry sauce mix with 1-1/4 cups water in a saucepan.
3. Cook and stir until thickened.

### To make a casserole, choose your favorites of these ingredients:

- 1 cup of uncooked diced potatoes, pasta or rice
- 2 cups of uncooked, cooked, canned or frozen vegetables
- 1 1/2 cups of cooked meat, poultry, fish or beans
- 2/3 cup of Casserole Sauce Mix
- 2 1/2 cups of water or milk
- 1/2 to 1 cup of shredded cheese
- 1/2 to 1 cup of crushed crackers or cereal or bread crumbs

### Stove-top Method

1. Stir first three ingredients together with sauce mix and liquid in a large skillet.
2. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook for 30 minutes until uncooked ingredients are tender. Stir occasionally to prevent sticking.
3. Stir in cheese and top with desired topping. Cook to 165 degrees F.

### Baking in the Oven

1. Mix all desired ingredients (except for the topping) together in a casserole dish, top with topping and cover.
2. Bake in 350 degree oven for one hour

## Revisiting Leftovers

### HAMBURGER PATTY

Extra cooked patties can easily become “meatballs” in a pasta dish. They can also be used to make Shepherd’s Pie. Use mashed potatoes, vegetables, your favorite blend of seasonings and bake .

### POTATOES

Hash—truly a meal in itself—Sweet potatoes plus cumin can equal a smoky Southwest Hash. .Create new flavors with herbs, infused oils, or a bit of cheese Or how about a casserole, layered with potatoes, beef, pork or chicken, and sauce (see recipe casserole sauce mix)

### PULLED PORK

The slow cooker is an economist’s friend. Take a lesser cut of meat (in this case, pork shoulder) and cook until it’s falling apart Serve it with barbecue sauce on buns one day or burritos, tacos or nachos can use some of the pulled pork. Next day, use it to make a signature pizza with a drizzle of barbecue sauce and some grilled red onions.

### COOKED PASTA

Pasta that has been cooked—then tossed with olive oil to keep it from drying out and stored in an airtight container—can have many more miles on it. Mix pasta with vegetables and soy sauce; stir fry it for American Chop Suey. Or serve it cold tossed with a great vinaigrette and raw vegetables for pasta salad.

### COOKED BEANS

These can become bean burritos or bean quesadillas Or, use the beans in a casserole with vegetables, seasonings and casserole sauce mix.

### COOKED VEGETABLES

Leftover vegetables can be pureed, and then used as the base for a creamy soup (without the added fat of actual cream!)

## Resources:

### Harvest of Recipes Cookbook

<http://www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/featuredlinks/HarvestofRecipes.pdf>

### Recipes for Healthy Kids

<http://www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/featuredlinks/cookbook-homes.pdf>

### Healthy Economical Meals

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/budget/downloads/StepsToHealthyEconomicalMeals.pdf>

### Healthy Economical Recipes

<http://healthyfoodbankhub.feedingamerica.org/tools-and-resources/?r=>

### English Harvesters Cookbook

[https://www.harvesters.org/Harvesters.org/media/assets-uploaded/Harvesters%20Program%20Docs/Nutrition/HV-4130\\_Cookbook\\_2013\\_pages\\_FINAL-low-re-june-2013.pdf](https://www.harvesters.org/Harvesters.org/media/assets-uploaded/Harvesters%20Program%20Docs/Nutrition/HV-4130_Cookbook_2013_pages_FINAL-low-re-june-2013.pdf)

### Spanish Harvesters Cookbook

<https://www.harvesters.org/Harvesters.org/media/assets-uploaded/Agency/Harvesters-Spanish-Cookbook-2013.pdf>

## Who we are

### Nutrition Club

The Johnson County Community College Nutrition Club is a club where students can connect and explore educational opportunities and career development in the field of nutrition. We sponsor projects and events such as Hunger in the Heartland, food demonstrations, food packaging events and Project Strengths. We engage, participate, and plan activities to further our understanding in the field of nutrition, and to connect and network with students interested in a nutritional based career.

For more information about the Nutrition Club visit our Facebook page



### Enactus

Johnson County Community College's Enactus club aims to connect student, academic and business leaders through entrepreneurial-based projects to empower people and communities. The JCCC Enactus club is a chapter of the national organization Enactus USA. The purpose of Enactus is to provide students the opportunity to develop the kind of talent and perspective that employers are seeking by planning and implementing



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