

CLEVELAND COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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The Cleveland County Public Health Center Offers Simple Tips for Eating Healthy on a Budget

Just in time for the opening of the Foothills Farmers' Market at Shelby City Pavilion on Saturday, April 9th

(Shelby, NC)—The Foothills Farmers' Market opens at the Shelby Pavilion on Saturday, April 9th. Use these "eating healthy on a budget" tips to learn how to take advantage of the fresh, local foods available at the market without breaking the bank!

Erica Rutledge, Nutritionist for the Cleveland County Public Health Center's WIC program says, "Getting the most from your budget means getting the most from your food. Foods that are nutrient rich can provide more bang for your buck!" Nutrients which include healthy fats, proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals, work together for the wellbeing of you and your family. Try these 5 tips and lead the way to a healthy body and mind.

1. PLAN WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO EAT

Before you shop, write a list. See what foods you have and what foods you will need for recipes and snacks. "Foods prepared at home are more nutritious and can be cheaper than eating out or purchasing convenience foods like frozen dinners. Are there a few simple recipes that your family enjoys? Ask one of your local nutritionists at the Cleveland County Public Health Center for easy healthy recipes," says, Rutledge.

Try this one to start:

Macaroni & Cheese with Broccoli - makes 6 servings

You will need

- 2 cups whole-wheat elbow macaroni, uncooked
- 3 tbsp flour
- 2 cups non-fat milk
- 2 cups low-fat cheddar cheese, shredded
- ½ tsp pepper
- 2 cups broccoli (can be fresh or frozen), chopped and cooked

Directions

- Cook macaroni, drain and return to pan.
- Sprinkle flour and mix thoroughly.
- Over medium heat, slowly add milk, stirring into macaroni.
- Add cheese and pepper.
- Cook and stir over medium heat until milk and cheese thicken to a sauce (about 7-10 min).
- Stir in broccoli; heat thoroughly.

Hint: Adding 8 oz of cooked ham or chicken will create a complete one-dish meal perfect for the family.

2. DECIDE HOW MUCH TO MAKE

Making extra food will save time and energy in the kitchen. If you double this recipe, it will make 12 portions! Serve one portion and save the rest for meals or snacks later in the week. You could also freeze the leftovers to reheat in the microwave or oven the next week.

3. MAKE YOUR OWN HEALTHY SNACKS FOR THE FAMILY

Don't spend money on chips, candy, cakes, and cookies. Make your own healthy snacks for individual, even on-the-go, nourishment. Purchase sandwich baggies and small plastic containers with lids (or re-use containers such as butter tubs). Now you are all set!

Snacks to Try

- Have a parfait party! Scoop individual servings from a low-fat yogurt tub into small containers with lids; add your favorite fresh fruits and cereal for crunch.
- Combine nuts, whole-grain cereal, dried fruits, and pretzels for a delicious homemade trail-mix. Use sandwich baggies for individual portions and easy travel.
- Sandwiches and wraps aren't just for lunch. Prepare mini wraps by rolling shredded carrots, cucumber, and cheese in a whole-wheat tortilla. Slice in half and bag. Dip in your favorite dressing.

4. DETERMINE WHERE TO SHOP

Browse the newspaper, online, and at the store for coupons and weekly store specials. Shop at your local Foothills Farmers' Market. You can find seasonal fresh fruit and vegetables full of antioxidants. Don't forget to look for local meat, fish, eggs, cheese, baked goods, honey, marinades, and so much more. Supporting your local farmers' market strengthens your community and local economy. Debit and EBT cards are accepted. For more information, visit www.foothillsfarmersmarket.com.

5. CHOOSE NUTRITIOUS, LOW-COST FOODS

Protein foods can really put a strain on your wallet. Look for lean protein such as beans, eggs, fish, and chicken. These are low in fats that cause heart problems and can also be more affordable. A 2lb bag of dry beans makes 24 servings, at an estimated cost of less than 15 cents per serving. Eggs are also one of the most affordable sources of high quality protein, running approximately 15 cents per egg. Try canned fish such as tuna or salmon. Eating seafood twice a week may help prevent heart disease and contribute to brain development in children.

Pair these foods with healthy whole grains and fruits and vegetables. Whole-grains contain fiber that will keep you full longer, and they don't even cost extra! Brown rice, for instance, at about 10 cents per serving, is a great choice for your budget and health.

Shop for fresh fruit and vegetables in season. Broccoli, greens, spinach, mushrooms, radishes, beets, and strawberries are excellent spring produce in North Carolina. Don't be afraid to ask your local farmer at the Foothills Farmers' Market - it is the best way to find out how crops are doing. For a complete list of North Carolina seasonal fruits and vegetables visit the NC Cooperative extension at the Cleveland County Center.

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