



## Eating on a Slimming Wallet



Maintaining a healthy lifestyle without spending excess money can be difficult. Health-related foods typically cost more than conventional foods. For example, organic foods are significantly more expensive than conventional foods. In tough economic times many people are looking for ways to maintain a healthy lifestyle without breaking the bank. Use the following tips to eat on a slim wallet!

**Shop around.** You do not have to go an organic or health food specific store to find nutritious food. Many discount supermarkets offer food of equivalent nutritional values for a fraction of the price. You might also consider joining a member-owned food co-operative, where you trade volunteer time for big savings. For a list of co-ops in your area, visit [www.greenpeople.org](http://www.greenpeople.org).

**Know the code.** If you are willing to pay more for organics, be sure you get what you pay for. If unsure whether or not a food item is organic, read the stickers. If the code begins with a “4” it is not organic; organic food codes start with a “9.” Skip salad bars where you do not have information about the individual ingredients.

**Make sure it is worth it.** Just because a product is labeled “All Natural” does not mean it is better for you. Many foods are labeled in a way that makes them appear to be healthier, but they might actually be the same, if not worse for you. For example, “All Natural” vegetable chips that are fried in oil may have the same saturated fat and sodium levels as regular potato chips.

**Make it from scratch.** Besides being more expensive, prepackaged foods, such as cereal bars and trail mix, are generally higher in fat, calories, sodium and sugar. Take a healthier, less expensive approach by cleaning and preparing fresh vegetables or popping your own popcorn rather than purchasing the microwave variety.

Final Thought - While you are deciding whether or not it is worth the work to find the healthy bargains, consider that the federal government estimates that a third of all cancer and heart disease and up to 80 percent of diabetes could be prevented if people ate less, ate better food, and exercised more.

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