

Shopping for One or Two: Planning

Shopping for one or two people can be a challenge, but careful planning makes it easier. The following suggestions will make your trips to the store easier and help you save money at the same time.

At home

Plan meals and make a list.

- Make a shopping list and keep it handy so you can add to it as supplies run low.
- Plan what you will be eating for the week, using Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide.
- Look for food bargains in newspapers and flyers.
- Keep a list of prices for foods you usually buy and check it against advertised specials. The price in the flyer may not really be a sale price.
- Organize your shopping list in the same way that the store is laid out, to save time and energy while shopping.
- Find coupons that match your shopping list. Use coupons to buy only the foods that you need and want.

Shop with a friend.

- Arrange to shop with a friend. You can share the taxi fare and some of the larger grocery items.
- If you can't get to the store yourself, check whether your grocer offers a delivery service. Or contact a local senior centre, which may know volunteer drivers.
- Grocery shopping online is another option.



At the store

Look for better buys.

- Take your list, your coupons and glasses or magnifying glasses to read labels and prices. You might also want a calculator for figuring out which items are better buys.
- Buy canned or frozen vegetables and fruits. You don't need to clean or chop them, you save money, and they won't rot in your crisper! You get the same health benefits whether your vegetables and fruits are fresh, frozen or canned.
- Buy canned vegetables and fruit packed in water or juice, not in syrup, and have no added sugar or salt.
- Buy frozen vegetables and fruit without sauces or added salt or sugar.
- Shop when the store is not as busy, so employees will have time to help with items that are hard to reach or lift.
- Take advantage of discount days for seniors offered by some grocery stores.
- Compare prices between brands. Store brands are often cheaper.
- Check the "unit price" such as the price per gram (ounce) or per kilogram (pound). Most grocery stores display unit prices on shelf labels above or below the item. Bigger sizes are not always the best buy.
- Buy the size that is right for you. Smaller portions are available for a variety of foods (soup, fruits, vegetables, baked beans, stews, pudding, yogurt, cheese) and may be worth the extra cost if you can avoid throwing any away.
- If the larger size is less expensive but more than you can use, share the extra with a friend.



- Bulk bins allow you to buy exactly as much as you want of many staples. Bulk items are usually cheaper, but not always. Check unit prices to be sure.
- The grade or quality of a product is determined by looks, not by nutritional value. You can save money by buying lower grade, such as Utility Grade or Grade B chickens and Canada Choice fruits and vegetables.

Read labels.

- Read labels to be sure you are getting what you want. Here's what to look for:
 - Check the list of ingredients. These are listed from the most amount in the food to the least amount.
 - Look at the Nutrition Facts table and check the serving size to compare it to how much you eat.
 - Look at the %DV (daily value) for nutrients. A simple rule of thumb: 5% or less is a little, 15% or more is a lot for any nutrient. Choose foods that are lower in salt, sugar and saturated/trans fat.
 - Check the “best before” date to make sure the food won't spoil before you can eat it.
- When the store is not busy, ask cashiers to ring your groceries through more slowly so that you can check for correct pricing.