



### Weekly Tip:

When fresh fruit and vegetables are not an option due to season availability or price, you do not have to go without!

Frozen is always better than canned because the canning process exposes fruits and veggies to heat, and moisture which can break down nutrients and also introduces high levels of sodium and other preservatives that our bodies just don't need!

Individually quick frozen fruits and veggies can be bought in large quantities and usually at great prices and go a long, long way. It is also a great way to introduce new foods to your family that they may not be exposed to if they aren't available fresh in your area.

If you are a gardener, grow your own in the summer, and freeze them for winter - it is an awesome way to help your wallet and your waistline! If you don't have a garden that's ok—visit your local Farmer's market or U-pick and stock up on all the fresh (and soon to be frozen) goodness!

## Healthy Family, Healthy Wallet

I have to admit that one of my pet peeves is having people tell me that they can't afford to eat healthy. I hear complaints like that all the time - excuses really, that healthy food is too expensive, that the unhealthy stuff is just sooooo much cheaper. And you know what? I call BS.

There are very few families out there that eat as healthy as my family does and yet you may be surprised to know that I budget only \$100 a week for groceries and that includes cleaning supplies and paper products. Granted that I also spend about \$300 twice a year for major pantry filling and I increase our budget for special occasions like Christmas and Easter—but I only do that because I can. There have been many times in my life when I couldn't because the money just wasn't there and you know what? Not only did we manage to eat, we managed to eat well and healthy.

So how do I do it? How do I believe that a family budget only needs \$100/person/month as a minimum for healthy eating? I do it and I promote it because healthy eating isn't a matter of finances, it is a matter of effort. Yes it is true that I am professionally trained with over 20 years of experience in the Food

Services Industry so I have a little extra 'know how' on my side, but that is what I mean about effort—if you don't know how to eat healthy on a limited budget, you must put in the effort to learn how instead of just throwing up your hands in frustration as you navigate yet another drive through. Reading this article is the first step so give yourself a pat on the back, if you need help—I am here!!

There are 3 P's to the process of healthy eating on a budget - **PLANNING, PAYING & PREPARATION.**

The first step—planning—means that you must sit down at least once a week to plan your meals and snacks for the upcoming week. It is when we are rushed and hungry that we end up relying on fast and easy convenience foods to fill up our family but if we have planned ahead, know what is for dinner or for lunch, the stress and uncertainty is removed, paving the way to success! Plan your menu thinking of ways to cook once and eat twice. Can you make extra spaghetti sauce on Monday to use for Sloppy Joes or Chili on Wednesday? Can you bring leftovers for lunch? Plan your week—write it down and as you go through, look in your cupboards and make a shopping list for the week.

How can you use what you have and what do you need to buy to make your menu plan work? Once you have your menu and your shopping list—you can then go on to P2—paying. The less you shop, the more you spend so plan to shop only once for the week. You have a budget—so bring only that—in cash. No debit or credit cards. If you have \$100 budgeted—bring \$90, your list and a calculator and head out to the store. If you have only cash, you will watch prices, stick to your list and of course avoid impulse purchases that you don't need and can't afford. Now here is where some extra skills come into play. I don't believe in buying bulk but I do believe in buying big. You can buy an entire pork loin for about \$15 - cutting it yourself will get you about 12 good boneless pork chops and enough cubes for a great meal of souvlaki, kabobs or stew. Depending on the size of your family, you can get 3—6 meals from that one \$15 meat purchase. Buying a family pack of lean ground beef and re-packaging it in 1 or 2 pound portions will save you tons of money—as will buying a whole fresh fryer chicken for less than \$10 - cutting it up for breasts, back, legs, wings—WAY cheaper than just buying breasts! So much more cluck for your buck!

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# Recipe Corner

Delicious and nutritious snack and meal ideas that are perfect for the whole family!  
Straight from Michelle's kitchen!



Michelle's Blog:

[www.butterflyconsultations.com/blog](http://www.butterflyconsultations.com/blog)

*These two dishes received rave reviews from some great friends at my barbeque Saturday night so I promised that I would share the recipes!*

## Garlic & Lime BBQ'd Pork

In a small food processor or blender (I used my baby bullet) - combine 8 peeled cloves of fresh garlic, two whole limes that have been peeled and quartered, 1 tablespoon of oregano and 2 teaspoons of kosher salt. Puree together and add 1/4 cup of olive oil, mix well. Adjust taste to liking by adding more oil to cut the tang, more salt or lime just to cut the salt. I prefer my marinade to be tangy—you should taste the lime and garlic—that's the whole point! Blend well.

In a large plastic freezer bag - place 8 pork chops or if you prefer (as I do) - slice an entire pork loin into 1.5" chops (use the remainder of the loin that does not slice well for cubed pork for souvlaki, shish kabobs etc). Place pork into bag and add your prepared marinade. Seal the bag and work the marinade over the pork until it is well covered, refrigerate for at least 2 hours and BBQ!!!

## Broccoli Salad

Cut and wash 5 cups of broccoli florets. Add 1/2 cup of unsalted sunflower seed kernels, 1/2 cup raisins, 1 cup frozen peas (that have been thawed), 1/4 cup hemp seed and one whole sweet white or red onion—diced. Set aside.

For the dressing, blend 1 cup of non-fat mayonnaise with 1 tablespoon of sugar and 1 tablespoon of white vinegar—mix well, adjust to taste but don't make too sweet or it will overpower the salad, it should be slightly tart. Add to veggies and stir until well covered, refrigerate overnight or for at least 2 hours before serving to let flavours meld. You can add 1/4 cup crumbled bacon and/or 1/2 cup cubed cheddar but adding them will also add fat so be warned ;) Enjoy!!

## *Healthy Family, Healthy Wallet—Continued*

Buying a big bag of carrots and whole celery instead of baby carrots and hearts are a great way to eat fresh and wallet friendly. Frozen veggies are a much healthier option than canned and so much cheaper when fresh is just not an option! A box of pudding mix and 2 cups of milk will make you 4 home-made pudding cups for less than half the price of pre-packaged one and you can use skim or 1% milk—not to mention they are the environmentally friendly option. Do the same for jello—great treats for the kids! Skip the juice boxes and get the kids a water bottle! Save \$10 fresh milk and bread mid week and your shopping is done!!

Ok so you have your menu planned, you have paid cash for the items on your list and you are now ready for the last step of your new healthy lifestyle—the preparation! Look at your menu plan—what can you do ahead of time to make the rest of your week run smoother? Wash and cut up those fresh veggies. Place broccoli, cauliflower,

carrots and celery in water in the fridge. Slice peppers and onions and place in an airtight container. You can even pre-mince fresh garlic and store in a tablespoon of olive oil—ready for cooking!

If veggies are ready to eat, you will eat them—they make fast, easy and convenient snacks and using them for cooking is a breeze—saving you time and taking away the excuse to open a box for dinner!

Are you cutting up chicken, pork or re-packaging beef for the week—now is the time to do it. If you are going to use it within 48 hours, store it in the fridge, if not—the freezer is your friend. Can you make tomorrow's pasta sauce today when you have more time so all you have to do for dinner is heat it up and make noodles and salad? A HUGE time save on a busy evening when you might think there is no time between work and soccer for a healthy meal.

Look at your lunch plan for the week—can you make homemade granola bars? Pud-

ding cups, Jell-O? Do the kids have a thermos container to send leftovers to school? What can you do ahead of time on Sunday afternoon and what can they do themselves? Find the one day of the week where you have the time (or can make the time) and get everyone involved in preparing for the upcoming week. What a great lesson for the kids!

It is not more expensive to eat healthy—I hope I have proved that to you here. It does not require more money, but it does require more effort. You need to plan and prepare your way to healthy eating on any budget and the more limited that budget, the more planning and preparing it takes—but it can be done if you choose to do it. I can teach you how, I can show you the steps but no one can overcome 'I don't want to.' So now I guess it is time to ask yourself....

Do you want to?? I know I do! My family's health is worth the extra effort! I do, I do, I WILL!

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