Pick a **better** *snack*™ **March 2016**

National Nutrition Month

Celebrate National Nutrition Month with your favorite fruits and vegetables!

You may have heard that half of your plate (and your children's plate) should be fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables help us to stay full, fight infections, avoid chronic diseases, and maintain a healthy weight. They taste great too! Sometimes you may feel like fruits and vegetables are too expensive. With some thoughtful planning and careful shopping, colorful fruits and vegetables can take their place on your plate and not break your budget.

Tips for Affordable Fruits and Vegetables

(Adapted from the 10 tips Nutrition Education Series at www.Choosemyplate.gov)

1. **Buy in season** - Choose fruits and vegetables that are in season. They will taste better and be available for a cheaper price. A farmer's market is a great place to find local produce.

2. **Shop sales** - Grocery stores typically have a weekly ad that will show what's on sale. Make your grocery list based on these sale items. Coupons are helpful too.

3. **Have a grocery list and stick to it** - Plan your meals for the week and make a grocery list before going to the store. You may find it easier to plan on four or five meals and then use leftovers for the rest of the week.

4. **Buy canned or frozen** - Compare the amount you get from fresh, canned, or frozen for a particular fruit or vegetable. It may be cheaper to buy the canned or frozen versions. Look for "100% juice" for canned fruits or "low sodium" or "no salt added" for canned vegetables. Store brands may be cheaper and often the same or similar product.

5. **Keep it simple** - Choose fruits and vegetables in their simplest form. Pre-cut, pre-washed, or individual serving cups can be convenient, but usually cost more.

6. **Start a garde**n - Gardening at home is a great way to have plenty of fruits and vegetables and not pay store prices. Start small with a pot on a door step or deck. Beginner gardeners may find herbs, cucumbers, peppers, or tomatoes a good place to start.

Funded by USDA 's SNAP, an equal opportunity provider and employer, in collaboration with the Iowa Departments of Human Services and Public Health. Iowa's Food Assistance Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. Go to dhs.iowa.gov/food-assistance for more information.

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Wash. Bite. How easy is that?