



The foundation
of kidney care.

Kidney Friendly Eating on a Budget

One of the best things you can do for your budget and your kidney diet is to cook from scratch at home more often. Cooking at home is less expensive than buying convenience foods; and pre-packaged convenience foods tend to be very high in sodium and other additives. You can also cook large batches and freeze individual portions for your own version of convenience foods! To eat well and reduce your grocery bill, check out the tips below.

Vegetables and Fruit

- Buy fresh local produce when it is in season, it will be less expensive than the imported produce and it will taste better:
- **Winter** – turnips, onions, carrots, potatoes
- **Spring** – strawberries, rhubarb, lettuce
- **Summer** – cherries, berries, peaches, corn, green/yellow beans, cucumbers
- **Fall** – apples, pears, plums, grapes, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower
- Try frozen vegetables without added sauces and seasonings and frozen fruit without added sugar if you are worried about fresh produce spoiling before you use it. They are less expensive but just as nutritious, and you can use the exact amount you need!
- Canned vegetables and fruits, although inexpensive, tend to be packed with lots of sodium and/or sugar. If you are going to purchase them look for canned vegetables with “no salt added” and fruit with “no sugar added”.
- Purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at different stages of ripeness (some that is ready to eat today and some that will not be ripe for a few days).

Inexpensive buys

- Cabbage, carrots, potatoes, turnips, onions, apples
- Fresh produce in season
- Canned tomatoes (look for no added salt varieties)

Dairy

- Purchase milk in bags rather than in cartons, you can freeze the extra bags and defrost them as needed.
- Buy plain yogurt and add your own fresh or frozen fruit.
- Mix skim milk powder with water according to package directions.



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Inexpensive buys:

- Skim milk powder
- Plain yogurt

Grain Products

- To maintain freshness, keep bread in the freezer, well wrapped. Remove slices as needed.
- Stock up when pasta is on sale; it can be stored for several years if left unopened in a dark place.
- Buy plain ready-to-eat cereals rather than the more expensive pre-sweetened varieties. Add fruit for sweetness, if desired.

Inexpensive buys:

- Parboiled rice
- Macaroni, spaghetti, noodles
- Hot cereals, plain ready-to-eat cereals

Meat and Alternatives

- Eggs are a great quality protein source, and only cost a few dollars for a dozen. Peanut butter is an inexpensive protein source as well, but should be limited to one serving per day (1 ½ tbsp).
- Save money by buying canned light tuna and pink salmon, which cost less than other varieties. Rinse with water to remove sodium.
- It is usually cheaper to buy larger cuts of meat, such as a whole chicken vs. chicken breasts. You can divide it into individual portions and freeze them to use later, or roast the whole thing at once and have leftovers.
- Arrange to share a larger package with a friend.
- If you have freezer space, buy larger packages when meat is on sale. At home, immediately divide the meat into individual servings, rewrap in plastic wrap and freezer bags, label and date packages and freeze.
- Try having one or two meatless meals a week. Try scrambled eggs, omelettes, or tofu.

Inexpensive buys:

- Less tender meat such as blade, chuck, flank, round, stewing meat, ground beef
- Whole poultry, grade B or utility grade, chicken legs
- Eggs
- Beans, lentils, peanut butter
- Pork butt, loin or rib, pork chops
- Canned fish (look for low sodium varieties)



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Other Foods

Limit purchase of high energy, low nutrient foods such as soft drinks, chocolate, chips and other snack foods. These are expensive and don't provide the vitamins and minerals needed for a healthy diet.

Shopping at the grocery store:

- Check out the grocery store flyers and plan your meals based on what is on sale (and fits your kidney diet).
- Plan your meals ahead of time, write a grocery list and stick to it to help you stay within your budget and reduce impulse buying.
- Compare costs between different grocery stores to find your cheapest options.
- Compare prices between name brand and generic brand items.
- Use coupons for products you need (as long as the savings are worthwhile and make the products cost less than the generic brands). Find coupons in the newspaper flyers, the internet, or at the stores.
- If it is less expensive to buy club pack items but you don't think you will be able to use it all, share with a friend or family member and split the cost.
- Try out buying lower grade meats and produce, grade is based on appearance not nutrient quality (i.e. grade B looks less perfect than A).
- Bring your own bags to avoid needing to buy any.

Check out alternative places to buy your fresh produce, take along a list of low and high potassium foods if you need to restrict potassium:

- Farmer's Markets
- Farm Gate Stands
- Community Gardens
- Community Shared Agriculture
- Good Food Box Programs

Emergency Food Resources:

- Self-Help Food Banks (Allow you to choose your own items to tailor to your kidney diet)
- Community Meals or Hamper Programs (Often run through local churches or community programs)