



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 simplify your trips to the store and save money at the same time.

At home



- ⚙ 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 Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating. Think about how you will use leftovers. (See Senior Friendly Ideas for Healthy Eating 9.)
- ⚙ Look for advertisements in newspapers and flyers. You may want to change your menu to take advantage of good buys.
- ⚙ 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 any coupons that match your shopping list. Use coupons to buy only the foods that you want and need. Try not to buy something just to use the coupon.
- ⚙ Eat before you go, so you are not tempted by impulse buying.
- ⚙ 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.
- ⚙ Arrange to shop with a friend. You can share the taxi fare and some of the larger grocery items.
- ⚙ 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.



At the store

- ⚙ Shop when the store is not as busy, so employees will have time to help with items that are hard to reach or lift and so you can comparison shop in peace.
- ⚙ Take advantage of discount days for seniors, offered by some grocery stores.
- ⚙ Stick to your list, but also be flexible enough to allow for in-store bargains.
- ⚙ Compare prices between brands. Store brands are often cheaper.
- ⚙ Check the “unit price” such as the price per ounce (gram) or per pound (kilogram). 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 the most economical and convenient 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.
- ⚙ Sometimes convenience is worth the extra cost. Buy a supply of easy to prepare or ready-made foods for the days you don't feel like cooking or are ill. Frozen dinners, canned chili and stew can become complete meals when eaten with a roll, milk and fruit.
- ⚙ Bulk bins allow you to buy exactly as much as you want of such staples as flour, sugar, mixes, rice, beans, dried fruits, nuts, cereals, pastas and herbs. 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. If appearance doesn't matter to you, save money by buying lower grade, such as Utility Grade or Grade B chickens and Canada Choice fruits and vegetables.
- ⚙ Read labels to be sure you are getting what you want. Check the ingredients, listed in descending order by quantity, with the main ingredient listed first.
- ⚙ Check the “best before” date to make sure the food won't spoil before you can eat it.
- ⚙ Beware of products with “shelf talkers” sticking out from the shelf or displayed at the end of an aisle. These products may not be on sale.
- ⚙ Watch the cash register screen during check out. Mistakes are made.
- ⚙ When the store is not busy, ask cashiers to ring your groceries through more slowly so that you can check for correct pricing.

