

## Save Money Using Coupons



- Clip coupons from newspapers, magazines and online resources. There are many ways to find free coupons. Be cautious about Web sites or mail-order businesses that charge for coupons.
- Clip coupons for items you know you'll use. It's not a bargain if it spoils or just sits in your pantry.
- Organize your coupons.
  - You can use an envelope or buy a coupon organizer. Envelopes are inexpensive and easy to replace when they become tattered. Some dollar stores sell coupon organizers.
  - Organize coupons by categories. Coupon organizers come with divider tabs for different items such as dairy foods, cleaning products, etc. If you're using envelopes, you could have several for different categories. You might want to group them the way products are grouped in the store.
  - Keep them in a convenient location. You've gone to all the effort to clip and organize your coupons, so don't leave for the store without them. Keep your coupon organizer in your purse or in your car.
- Always have a plan:
  - Use your coupons and grocery store sale advertisements to plan weekly menus.
  - Use your weekly menus to make your grocery list.
  - Mark the items on your list for which you have a coupon. You might highlight these or write a "C" next to them.
- Combine other discounts with your coupons.
  - Compare stores – some grocery stores may have lower prices than others. Some stores will match competitors' advertised sale prices.
  - Take advantage of special discounts like double coupon days or senior discounts. Use the store discount card when available.
  - Sometimes you can use both a store coupon and a manufacturer's coupon for the same item.
- Check unit prices. If a coupon is good for any size, you might find the lowest cost per ounce or unit is with the smallest size.
- Coupons aren't just for grocery store products any more. A variety of stores and manufacturers offer coupons. When possible, combine these coupons with sales, rebates, or other discounts. Don't buy the item just because you have a coupon. Comparison shop to make sure you are getting the best price.

**Remember these other tips for saving money when shopping for food:**

*Compare forms* and buy the form that costs less for each serving. Already cooked or cut up food usually costs more per serving. For example, a whole chicken will cost less than a chicken already cut up. Bulk ground beef costs less than ground beef patties. A whole cabbage costs less than a bag of slaw. Dry milk costs less than fresh milk (it can be used in cooking if you prefer to drink fresh milk or mix it one-half and one-half with fresh milk.)

*Compare sizes* and buy the size that costs less for each serving. For example, a gallon of milk costs less per serving than milk in quarts or half gallons. A large can of sliced peaches costs less than the same amount of peaches in smaller cans. Family-size packages of meat cost less per serving than smaller packages. Large packages of meat can be divided into freezer bags and stored for later use.

*Compare packaging* and buy the form that costs less for each serving. Foods in fancy packages, like pre-packaged snacks and lunches, usually cost more. Cheese in blocks cost less for a serving than wrapped single slices. Plain frozen vegetables cost less than frozen vegetables in sauce. Dry beans cost less per serving than canned beans. Plain rice costs less than seasoned rice mixes.

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