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## **Nutrition Stimulus Plan**

Americans have slipped into a nutrition recession, eating foods that are high in fat and calories and cost more, but provide limited nutritional value. The USDA predicts that food prices will rise 4.5 to 5.5 percent this year, making it important to shop smarter at the supermarket and get more nutritional bang for your buck. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle doesn't have to cost a lot – you can cinch your belt and your purse strings at the same time with a nutrition stimulus plan by including inexpensive foods like lean meats, milk, eggs and whole grains. Our four step nutrition stimulus plan is easy to follow and will help you bank on health.

**Step 1: Fill your cart with nutrient-rich foods** – The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends eating more whole grains, vegetables, fruits and low-fat dairy foods to help provide the vitamins and minerals most Americans are lacking. These foods aren't only good for your waistline – they're good for your wallet, too.

- *Look for a rainbow* – Choose vibrantly colored fruits and vegetables – the brighter color indicates more vitamins and minerals.
- *Go for whole grains* – Buy whole grain, fortified breads and cereals that are fiber-rich.
- *Dash for Dairy* – Low-fat and fat-free milk, cheese and yogurt provide a calcium bailout. On average, an eight ounce serving of milk costs only a quarter and provides a unique package of nine essential vitamins and minerals, including vitamins A and D and potassium, making it one of the best beverage bargains.
- *Lean on protein* – Choose lean beef, skinless poultry, fish, eggs, dairy, beans and nuts for affordable protein sources.

**Step 2: Plan meals ahead** – Prior planning prevents last minute gas guzzling shopping trips.

**Step 3: Clip coupons** – Using coupons can save up to 15 percent on your grocery bill.

**Step 4: Use a shopping list** - Sticking to a list can help you avoid impulse purchases. According the Food Marketing Institute, Americans spend \$2 for every minute spent in the supermarket. Prior planning and a shopping list can save you time and money.

In today's economy, a nutrition stimulus plan loaded with nutrient-rich dairy foods, fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean protein can help your wallet and your waistline. For shopping tips and simple, nutrient-rich meal ideas, visit the Southeast Dairy Association's Web site at [www.southeastdairy.org](http://www.southeastdairy.org).