

# Grocery Shopping Made Easier, Faster & Cheaper

Here are a few tips to make grocery shopping easier, time-efficient, and budget friendly for your Congregate Meal Program.

## 1. Plan Ahead

- Planning the Congregate Meal Program menu in advance (one month) will allow for better organization with meal preparation and delivery as well as easier forecasting for grocery needs.
- If the Congregate Meal Program site has adequate storage space, planning a grocery list for at least 1-2 weeks of your program may help to:
  - Decrease the number of times shopping per week (time and cost efficient)
  - Allow for bulk food purchases of certain foods (cost-efficient)

## 2. Inventory Check

- Knowing what foods and exactly how much you have at the meal program site before making a grocery list/order will avoid making two or three mini trips to grocery stores for small items.

## 3. One-Stop-Shop

- Shopping at one location for groceries will allow for more time spent preparing and serving a quality meal to the senior population.
- This store may near the meal program site, convenient to travel to, it has a wide selection of foods where all of the food products you need will be available, and it will be a place that is affordable for the meal program budget.

## 4. Product Comparison

- Look for no name and store brand foods instead of name brand foods (Kraft) and compare price and size. These are usually more affordable choices.
- If possible search grocery flyers and compare sale prices. (the “Flipp” app is a convenient tool to quickly search sale prices for a specific item)
- Utilize the price matching services offered by many grocery stores.



## 5. Make Substitutions When Needed

- Can't find a food item? Too expensive? Different item on sale? While in the grocery store, look for a better substitution that can be easily used in the recipe, is budget-friendly, and saves time and money travelling to another store.
- Frozen fruits and vegetables can be substituted in many recipes (ie. soups, casseroles).
- Buying dried beans and lentils are often cheaper than canned.
- Depending on the season, fresh vegetables and fruits are cheaper during certain times of the year. Visit this website to know the best times for buying fresh produce:  
<http://localfoods.about.com/od/CanadianProduceGuides/a/Manitoba-Fruits-And-Vegetables.htm>

