

Healthy food doesn't have to be expensive

By Marsha Maxwell, Deseret News

One dollar and fifty cents per day could make a difference for your health. That's the difference in cost between a healthy diet of whole foods and an unhealthy diet of processed foods, according to a meta-study by Harvard University.

"For 60 percent to 70 percent of Americans, \$1.50 a day is not a big deal," the study's author, Dariush Mozaffarian, told *Harvard* magazine. However, the figure adds up to \$2,200 per year for a family of four, which could be out of reach for low-income families.

Meal planning and grocery-shopping strategies can shrink a family's overall grocery bill regardless of income, according to money-saving experts. And putting together inexpensive meals with healthy ingredients might be easier than consumers think. Three important steps to cutting a family's grocery bill are paying attention to sale prices, planning menus in advance and buying whole rather than processed foods.

It's important to define what a healthy diet means, if a family is trying to keep down costs. It doesn't necessarily mean buying specialty foods, like organic grass-fed beef for \$10-\$20 a pound or organic quinoa for \$5-\$8 per pound.

Mozaffarian defines a healthy diet as one that reduces "things we know are unhealthy like processed meats, highly refined starches, sugars ... trans fat, and sodium," and that emphasizes "things we know are good like fruits, vegetables, nuts, vegetable oils, and fish." Other foods, like chicken, eggs, whole grains and legumes are also part of a healthy diet.

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