

Planning healthy lunches makes cents



The Center for Science in the Public Interest reports that the cost to eat healthfully is actually less than one might assume. Here are some cost comparisons, serving per serving, for common healthful and not as healthy food choices:

—Fresh fruit/veggie snack, 34 cents; unhealthy packaged snacks, 67 cents.

—Vegetable side dish, 27 cents; packaged, 31 cents.

—Banana snack, 16 cents; Hershey's bar, 99 cents.

—Side dish sweet potatoes, 31 cents; Stovetop stuffing, 38 cents.

—USDA recommendation (2,000 calorie diet) of 2 cups fruit and 2 1/2 cups vegetables, \$2.50 per day. Fast foods and packaged snacks cost more money and are higher in calories.

Taking a little time to organize and plan a shopping list and lunch menu for the arriving work week will definitely pay off in more ways than one. Not only can buying whole, fresh foods boost your savings, but it will boost your health.

Of course, it is best to buy fruits and vegetables that are in season at a lower price. But, it is worth it to check out the frozen and canned fruits and vegetables to stock up when there are good offers at the market.

Extension Corner

Written by Tracy Trumper, CSU Extension

For some fresh foods, it does cost more per calorie; however, the little extra cost is worth it when looking at the lower calorie and vitamin benefits.

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